

PlayStation®

Official Magazine - UK

Issue 021 August 2008 £5.99
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The Future of Shooters

Killzone 2 leads the charge





- Real life impact damage modelling •
- A true 16 player online racing game •
- Interactive in-game tutorial by Tiff Needell •
- Racing dynamics balanced to perfection by Bruno Senna •
- Unlock and race over 50 Ferrari cars from vintage legends to the FXX •
- Extreme weather conditions that test your driving skills to the max •

Wii

PLAYSTATION 3

PlayStation 2

NINTENDO DS

Ferrari Challenge-Trofeo Pirelli-The Official Game ©2008 System 3 Software Ltd. All Rights Reserved. Published and Distributed by System 3 Software Ltd. NINTENDO DS, Wii AND THE Wii LOGO ARE TRADEMARKS OF NINTENDO. "PS" and "PlayStation" are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. All Rights Reserved. Produced under license of Ferrari S.p.A. FERRARI, the PRANCING HORSE device, all associated logos and distinctive designs are trademarks of Ferrari S.p.A. The body designs of the Ferrari cars are protected as Ferrari property under design, trademark and trade dress regulations.



Ferrari Challenge

Trofeo **PIRELLI**

Apparently
there are other
racing games.



Actual screen shots

"...leaves the competition standing."

Official PlayStation Magazine

"looks awesome, plays even better."

Tiff Needell, TV Presenter and Journalist

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Welcome



There's a danger in placing too much credence on review aggregation sites, unless you value the opinion of whatIthinkaboutgamez.com, but it's worth noting that Metal Gear Solid 4 is now the second highest rated single-format game of this generation on metacritic, with a 95% average to Super Mario Galaxy's 97%.

So, on the numbers, Kojima's series-closer is the single-best reason to own a PS3, which is borne out by the fact it's also the console's quickest selling exclusive. But for me, MGS4's most impressive achievement has nothing to do with numbers.

Returning to Shadow Moses is my favourite PS3 moment so far. As you explore the desolate base, memories come flooding back. Just as Snake is haunted by his previous mission, so you find yourself reflecting on where you were nine years ago and how different life was when you first played MGS on PS1. It's a genuinely powerful experience, made more so by its interactivity, and also raw testament to what the medium can *really* do. I loved it, and chasing the next brilliant moment like that is, I hope, what this mag is all about.

Tim Clark Editor

tim.clark@futurenet.co.uk

COVER FEATURE

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74 THE NEW SHOOTERS

Killzone 2 heads up our insider's guide to the next wave of first-person carnage. Who will you be shooting at next?

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From sun gods to zombie attack hounds, we take a trip to the PlayStation dog pound.

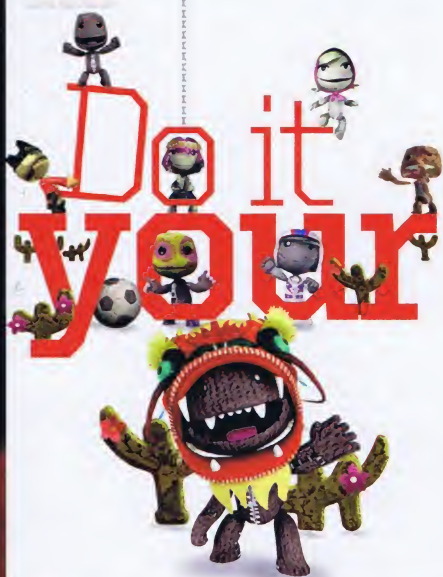


68 GOD IS IN THE DETAILS

God Of War creator, David Jaffe, talks PSN, Twisted Metal and what's wrong with GTA.

feature

feature



Little Big Planet

Alex Farns, the founder of Media Molecule, is a man of many talents. Not only is he a brilliant game designer, but he's also a talented writer. In his latest work, Little Big Planet, he's created a world of whimsical, colorful characters and environments. The game is a celebration of the PlayStation 3's capabilities, and it's a testament to the power of imagination.

It's back to a little earlier and Alex is showing off a star level and giving what is said to be the star character, a giant, multi-eyed, multi-limbed, and the most powerful of all. Alex gives a background out of his recent PlayStation 3. It's a tribute to the power of imagination. The game is a celebration of the PlayStation 3's capabilities, and it's a testament to the power of imagination.

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We make our own bizarre level and delve deep into Sony's create and share sensation.

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Who we are...



Tim Clark
Editor

Gripped by midlife crisis after revisiting Shadow Moses in MGS4. Now answers to 'Old Clark'.

Game of the moment
Soulcalibur IV
Favourite FPS
Call Of Duty 4



Ben Wilson
Deputy editor

Unlocked the service menu on his brand new Bravia. Made a giant '4' appear on the screen. Burst into tears.

Game of the moment
NHL 08
Favourite FPS
Stranglehold



Leon Hurley
Commissioning editor

Our real life guitar hero took on Jay Z at Glasto. Jigga won on points.

Game of the moment
Metal Gear Solid 4
Favourite FPS
Oblivion



Rachel Weber
Agenda editor

Inspired by Bioshock coming to PS3, Rach started reading Atlas Shrugged... 39 pages down, only 644,061 to go.

Game of the moment
Siren: Blood Curse
Favourite FPS
Bioshock



Nathan Ditum
Reviews editor

After interviewing God Of War's creator, everything Nath says now starts with "Well, David thinks..."

Game of the moment
Little Big Planet
Favourite FPS
Doom



Helen Wooley
Operations editor

Is it 'souped-up' or 'suped-up'? Write in and solve one of the most bitterly fought rows in OPM history.

Game of the moment
Singstar Vol 2
Favourite FPS
Goldeneye

Write to the team at opm@futurenet.co.uk

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SUBSCRIPTIONS

Phone our UK hotline on 0870 837 4722
Subscribe online at myfavouritemagazines.co.uk

NEXT ISSUE ON SALE 6 AUGUST

Printed in the UK by Southernprint on behalf of Future.
Distributed in the UK by Seymour Distribution Ltd,
2 East Poultry Avenue, London EC1A 9PT. Tel: 0207 429 4000

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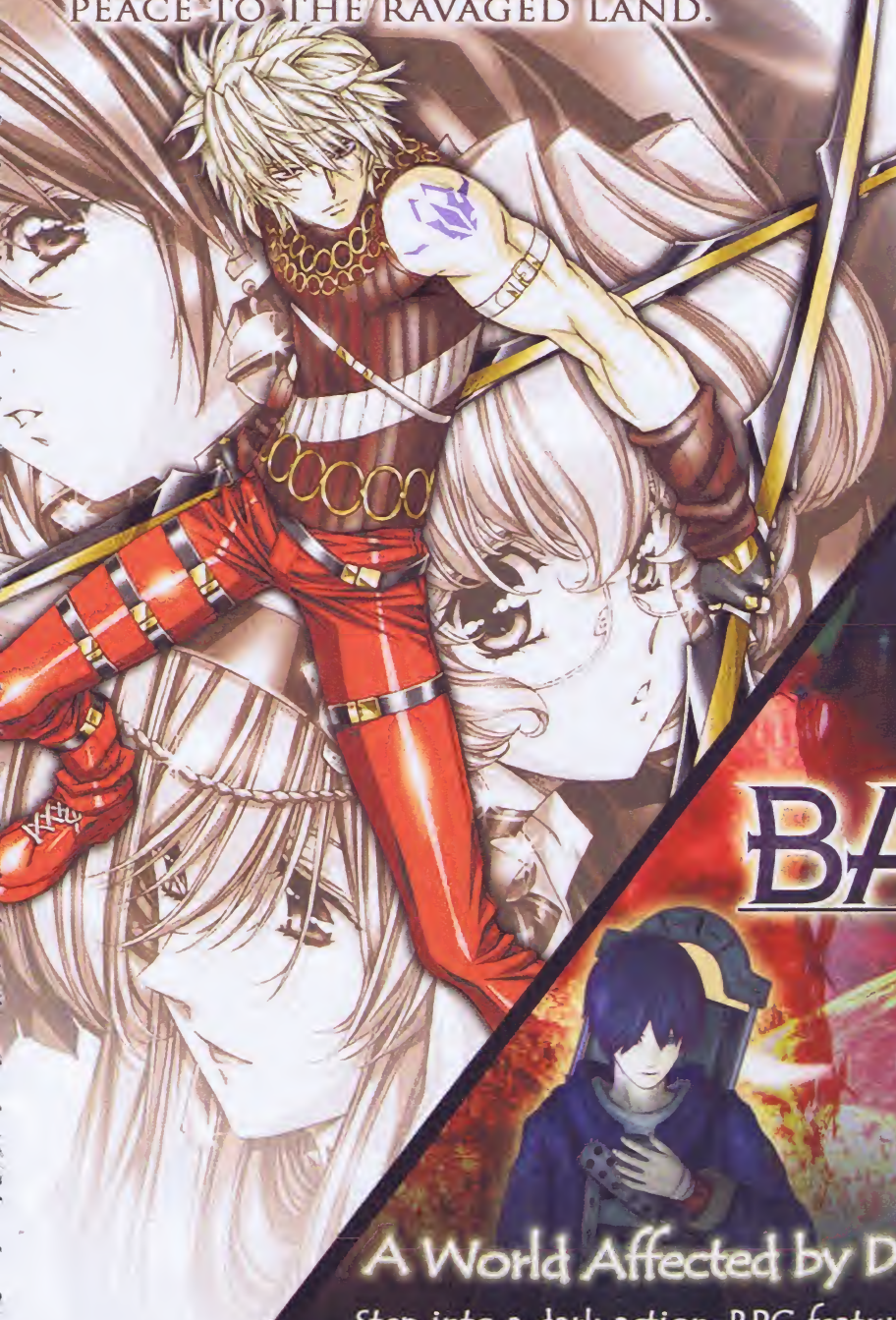
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On your disc



All aboard the demo express! Today we'll be making two exciting new stops on our way to gaming nirvana. Robert Ludlum's *The Bourne Conspiracy* serves up all the thrills of amnesiac espionage including a car chase through Paris and a taster of Jason's lethal takedowns. On top of that, control freaks can get their kicks as an evil tyrant with *Overlord: Raising Hell*. Our final stop is the archives, bursting with 26 hand-picked demos just begging to be installed. Check out *Sega Superstars Tennis* or *UEFA Euro 2008* for a sporting fix, or grab your gun and head into the freezing snow with *Lost Planet: Extreme Condition*.

Rachel Weber Agenda editor



Switch your PS3 on, find the game icon on the XMB bar and then select 'OPSM - UK Blu-ray Demo 2008/21'.



OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION
MAGAZINE ISSUE 21



The Bourne Conspiracy

Experience life as an elite secret agent in our Damon-free demo. Race through the streets of Paris in a desperate car chase, use your combat skills to escape the embassy in Zurich and relive one of Bourne's ultra-tense assassination missions. Shhhh...

This month's exclusive highlights...



Overlord: Raising Hell

Kill, maim and pillage as you learn the basics of being an evil Overlord. Lesson one: blame culture.



Lost Planet: Extreme Condition

Take the big guns and mech suits online. Practise with unranked player matches then create a custom game.



Sega Superstars Tennis

Just like Wimbledon, only with a lot more bananas. Play a match to unlock the zombie mini-game.



UEFA Euro 2008

Play a full match as Germany or France, or try your hand at the Be A Pro mode with the tournament's official game.



What if my disc doesn't work?

If it definitely doesn't work, send the disc to 'Disc Returns, OPM, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW' and we'll replace it. You can also email questions to opm@futurenet.co.uk. Please put 'Disc' in the subject line.

Also on the disc this month Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction, Devil May Cry 4, Uncharted: Drake's Fortune, Burnout Paradise, Need For Speed: Pro Street, Sega Rally, Juiced 2, Skate, NBA Live 08, The Simpsons Game, Stuntman: Ignition, Folklore, Virtua Tennis 3, FIFA 08, Tony Hawk's Proving Ground, Heavenly Sword, Turok, Pro Evolution Soccer 2008, FIFA Street 3, Bladestorm, Super Ruba'Dub, Championship Sprint, Rampart.



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WHAT HI-FI?
SOUND AND VISION



The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about...

Sega boss

Worldwide Studios head interviewed.

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PES 2009

First shots of the massive footy sequel.

► **Page 16**



Resi 5 wows us

Insider access with PS3's killer game.

► **Page 20**



Men vs women

How male brains respond differently to games.

► **Page 23**

Gang war!

Saints Row 2 takes a pop at GTA IV

► **Page 24**



1 If you had super powers...

...is the pitch for inFamous, Sony's new game of heroes and villains





Imagine actually having super powers. Would you be good or evil? Save the world or enslave it? (It's probably best *not* to think about having the power of invisibility – this isn't the Penthouse Letters page.) Making moral choices with your abilities is the high concept idea behind inFamous. Think Grand Theft Auto spliced with Heroes. And then be excited. Developed by Sucker Punch, the brains behind the consistently brilliant (and underrated) Sly Raccoon series, inFamous is an 'open world' game set in a vast city. You play a budding hero with an array of powers at his fingertips. And while it'll inevitably be compared to the likes of GTA IV and Mirror's Edge, the end result could be like nothing else seen so far on PlayStation 3.

The game first appeared at last year's E3 trade show, where a trailer

showed the lead character sprinting through the streets of an apocalyptic American city, clambering up neon shop signs, bounding over cars, and perched on top of a tall building as chaos played out on the streets below. The thunderous skies and gloomy architecture only made his powers seem all the more spectacular – unleashing bolts of electricity from his hands and throwing cars around like toys.

As you'll see in the shots over the page, it looks tremendous. And, as if the thought of roaming around an intricately detailed city, unleashing wrath on anyone who looks at you cockeyed wasn't exciting enough, there's an added twist to the set-up: you aren't forced to be a good guy. While Spidey, Batman and, to a much lesser extent, Wolverine, all preach a strict moral code, inFamous shuns ►



Dystopia



■ The art style is deliberately grim, making the in-game special FX look all the more eye-catching.

that (slightly patronising) stance in favour of letting you to choose how to use your unnatural gifts.

"There will be one story arc that will unfold as the game progresses, but how you play the missions as a good or bad hero will determine how the world reacts to you," explains game designer Nate Fox. "For example, if the challenge is to throw the ring of evil into the pit of

■ Sucker Punch promises a tight but deep control system which will enable you to clamber up or over scenery and zap people and objects with ease. Cool.

doom, you might do it by killing hundreds along the way, or take great care not to hurt any innocents. That choice is left to the player. It's up to us to provide meaningful consequences for those choices." The game's karma system tracks all your actions and apparently affects how people react to you – they might come to your aid in battle, for instance. We predict that, much like Bioshock, there will be different endings dependent on the choices you make along the way.



Dev talk

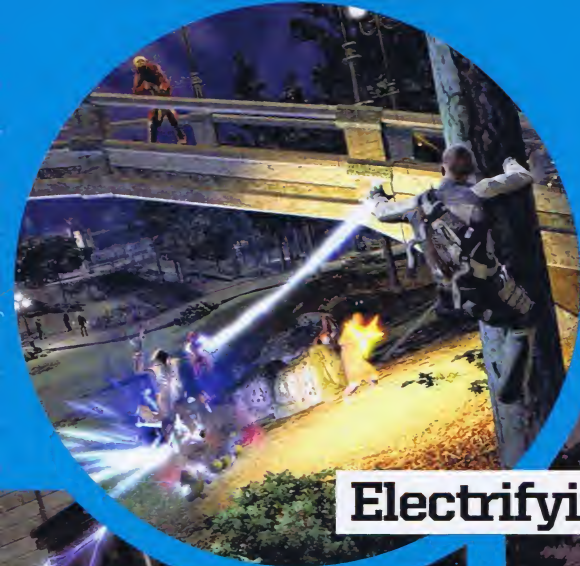
"InFamous will have a non-linear, open environment style of gameplay. We are making a superhero sandbox game that will allow players real freedom." **Nate Fox**
Designer, Sucker Punch

Booming entrance

Shunning the slow-build, inFamous will feature an explosive opening. It

The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about

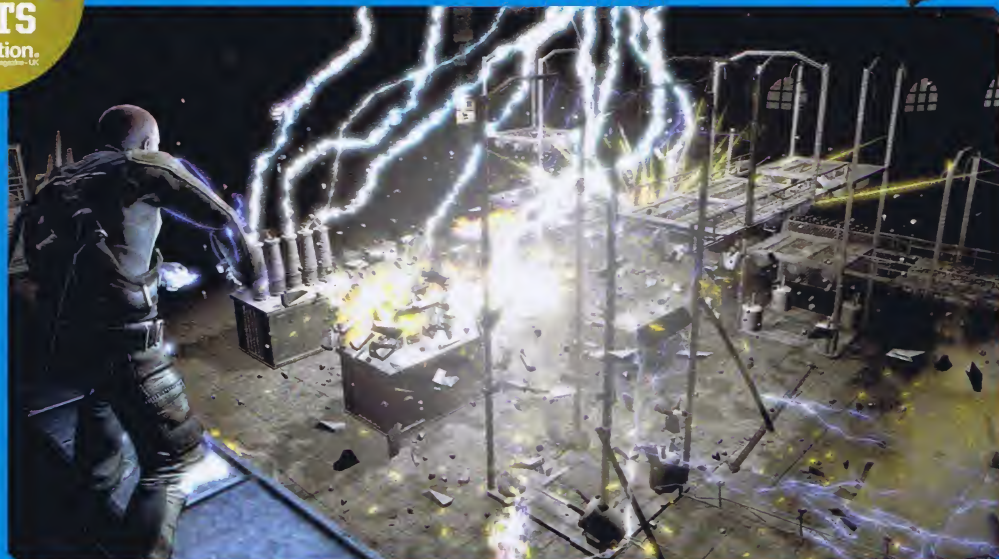


Electrifying!



■ No word on whether you'll be able to drive vehicles – but you will be able to fling them around.

EXCLUSIVE SHOTS
PlayStation.



begins peacefully enough, with the camera taking in a panoramic view of Empire City – the game's setting, which comprises three-islands. Everything is calm until you press **START** and a violent explosion rips through the city, engulfing six blocks in flame. Amidst the carnage, a man named Dylan – that's you – emerges, unaware, for now, that all the blast survivors are about to mutate and develop new powers. It turns out that many of those in the vicinity were already involved in criminal activity (who'd've guessed?), and so the quest to clean up the city begins.

The moral choices on offer aren't quite as simple as 'incinerate drug dealer' or 'attack old lady'. Instead, missions develop on the fly, with new

dilemmas cropping up at any point: for instance, you're on the way to disarm a bomb but notice a woman in the street bleeding and screaming. Do you go to help her and let the bomb explode? Or do you leave the woman dying and hope that you'll save a greater number by preventing the explosion? Your actions affect the world at large and feed back into those 'consequences' that Fox was talking about. This focus on choice also emerges in battle, when deciding which powers to utilise: during a fight against a mob on a bridge you can zap enemies before throwing them off the bridge, or use your electricity on nearby generators to level the entire area. Our vote: overkill.

As well as offering its fair share of

freedom, inFamous continues the trend set by Assassin's Creed and Mirror's Edge where much of the environment can be interacted with – just as the trailer suggested. "Using the city terrain and not just the ground to your advantage is a big part of what we want the experience to be about," explains Fox. "But it's more than just a static object to be climbed over – the city is a character in the game, which evolves as you play it. We've constructed a city and reactive population in order to multiply that sense of freedom players had in Sly [Raccoon]. You really get the sense that you're alive and powerful in a living, breathing city."

inFamous will be released in 2009. Check up on its development at suckerpunch.com.

Punchy pedigree

Developer Sucker Punch is best known for Sly Cooper, the thieving raccoon. Each of his three PS2 platform games featured tight controls, smart humour and constantly evolving gameplay. Nate Fox says inFamous will have the same qualities, but in a real world rather than a cartoon one. "The experience we want to give the player is 'what if this was really happening to you?'" he says. "And to believe that experience, we needed to set this game in a more believable universe than the Sly Cooper games. We have the opportunity to create a new universe with a specific set of powers that will translate into one heck of a fun game!"

PS
013



The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about

2 Meeting the new Sony boss

Shuhei Yoshida on Ico, PSN and his PS3 plans

Here are three things you need to know about Shuhei Yoshida, the man who replaced Phil Harrison as president of SCE Worldwide Studios on 16 May: he's been working at Sony for 22 years, he was a key player in the arrival of PS1 back in 1993, and, perhaps most impressively, he's the man who gave Ico the green light. We sat down with him to talk about his new role, and his thoughts on PlayStation 3's performance so far.



Boss bio

Yoshida-san joined Sony in 1986. He was head of SCEI's third-party licensing program at the launch of PS1, and went on to oversee Sony's US studios. He also managed the development of the PSP launch line-up.

What is your first priority as president of Worldwide Studios?

Well, there is a lot to do, but you said first priority... I know many people here in Europe but not in a day-to-day working sense, so a major priority for me is to understand how the studios here in Europe are organised – who are the key people, what projects are they working on?

Which of your first-party games do you think could be the most interesting, important project?

From the line-up, by far the most exciting for me is Little Big Planet – it's amazing to me how powerful that concept is, and I can't wait to see how consumers use that tool to create all kinds of things. Also, the success of the SingStar project is amazing, and how they are moving the franchise forward on PS3 is really incredible. I don't play SingStar in the office, but

I watch a lot of new videos are up online – it's really fun to watch.

How do you see the PSN model developing? Are you looking to get more first-party studios to use downloadable games to try out new ideas?

Absolutely, yes. We have supported teams to work on Everyday Shooter, Calling All Cars and Blast Factor. The Japan team did Echochrome – and they have some even stranger ideas that they're going to be announcing pretty soon. It has been a major focus for Phil and I and our studios to really support these creators who have unique ideas, which in the past may have been too niche or too risky. We are enjoying these projects, in a sense, much more than big projects because [those come with] a big pressure –

selling a million units used to be a big success. Now we think, 'A million? Nah, we failed!' But with PSN titles – 100,000 downloads? Great, we did it! With PSN, one unique idea can become a product – it doesn't have to have multiplayer or online support. It can just be a single core concept.

So, what's Team Ico up to then?

They are working on a title. I started the Ico project. Ueda-san joined my team in Japan as a cinematic animator, but he created a short movie and presented it to me and said, "I want to make this game." I said, "Yes, let's do it, but you have never made a game – we have to have experienced people to do it," so it took a while, recruiting one person at a time... And because Fumito Ueda doesn't compromise, we had to move the

"It'll take Team Ico four years to release a PS3 title!"

development from PS2 to PS3. I think I couldn't complete the game, because I moved to the US. It took four years and the second game took four years. So I started calling them the Olympic team. They haven't released a PS3 title yet – of course not – they'll take four years! But they have something really, really good on the way.

How do you feel PS3 is faring against its rivals?

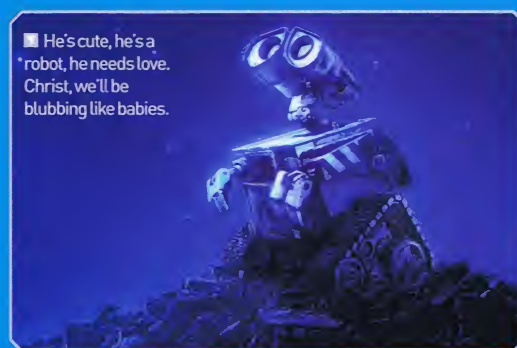
Last year was... difficult. Especially in the US and Europe. But this year we're feeling really good and next year will be even better. I don't necessarily think that the sales of Wii are hurting us. There's a theory that the people who have purchased Wii either have never played games before and would never have been interested in

purchasing any game if it was the controller, or are people who have not yet made the decision to move to HD at home, and maybe, because it looks like fun, they've decided to spend money this year on Wii. But when the time comes they'll move to PS3 or Xbox 360. So we are not losing at all, because eventually, these casual gamers might go back to their normal life, or they may move on to next-generation platforms. So overall, Nintendo's success is great for the industry – we are almost conspiring this huge movement, we are working on social gaming, on Rock Band types of games. We are all working to make videogames more playable for a larger number of people.

For a daily update of PlayStation facts direct from Sony, why not check out blog.us.playstation.com.

3 Wall-E hits PS3

The film is apparently a masterpiece. But can the game measure up?



Advance word on the latest CGI kiddie-magnet from the makers of Toy Story and Ratatouille is huge, with Hollywood gossip pit Ain't It Cool News declaring it to be not only Pixar's greatest achievement but also "arguably the best film Walt Disney has ever had its name on". The big question now is will the game come close to capturing what's so special about the film?

History suggests not, so during a recent trip to Pixar's San Francisco studios we asked the game's executive producer, Lyle Hall, why he thought animated movie tie-ins had such a poor reputation. "There are a lot of reasons," he explains. "They have a different place in the market than the Halos, Bioshocks and Call Of Dutys do. We have a very different audience – I mean, there aren't six-to-12 year-olds reviewing videogames, right? There are 18-to-30-something year-olds. People tend to review things they like or that they look at for critical acclaim. I don't think that enough reviewers put themselves in the shoes of the audience that the product is being targeted at."

Pressure and time

But it's not just the reviewing side. Hall also concedes that some of the games just aren't up to it, and hints at the pressures of developing to movie release deadlines. "A lot of them aren't very good," he admits, "for good reasons and bad reasons. Some of us try really hard to make the best damn game we can with the time and the people that we have, knowing that the movie's going to be out and the game has to be out then too." Will Wall-E buck the trend? Find out next month.





The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about



4

Will Pro Evo 2009 hit the target?

After a transitional season, Konami is gunning for glory

UK FTW

Still traumatised by the Home Nations' implosion? At least Britain can compete digitally – last year, Rob McLean from Aberdeen won the PES European Finals. This year's event will be held in Rome in September, where 64 of Europe's finest players will battle it out in the Champions League-style competition. For more info check out pesrankings.com. It's **PS3** to dive, right?

Good news, Arsenal fans. By the 2013/14 season, Theo Walcott will be quick like Jesus riding a comet. We know this because, despite some disappointment surrounding Pro Evolution Soccer's PS3 debut, we're *still* playing the Master League. (Tip: build your side around Rafael Van Der Vaart.) And with yet another treble in reach, we don't plan to stop until PES 2009 arrives this October. Confirmed features are thin on the ground but Konami is confident that last year's criticisms are being addressed –

starting with the visuals. As these first shots show, players look more lifelike, and the crowd don't look like they've been ported from the Mega Drive. On closer examination, the fans are still 2D cutouts, but there's some nice 'depth of field' blurring going on.

Grudge match

So far the shots are a mix of national teams and genero PES journeymen, likely due to the usual wrangling over kit and club licenses. Speaking of which, we've heard whisper of a

major licensing announcement, but can't say more – we don't want to jinx it. Another area for improvement will doubtless be online, which was hobbled by network issues last time out. What is certain, is that with FIFA increasingly capable of challenging on gameplay as well as licenses, PES can't afford another transitional season. Until then, we'll be forging a lethal strike partnership between Sergio Agüero and Karim Benzema.

What do you want from the next PES? Email your ideas to opm@futurenet.co.uk and we'll put them to Konami.



Hopefully keepers will no longer let shots go through them.



Great kits, but does anyone really ever play on this view?



The much derided crowds from PES 2008 look improved.





The Big 10

10 interesting facts you're not talking about

5

100% on Dragonforce on expert!!!

Meet the 16-year-old hero who pwned Guitar Hero III



"I wouldn't say my whole life revolves around Guitar Hero." It's probably the last thing you expect to hear from Chris Chike – the 16-year-old from Minnesota is a Guitar Hero wunderkind, conquering the epic Through The Fire And Flames by Dragonforce, on Expert difficulty, with 100% accuracy and an absolutely gargantuan 987,786 points haul.

He told us, "I completed Dragonforce on Expert the first day Guitar Hero III came out," and he's been working his way up to 100% ever

since. Before you start cursing his god-given talent and your sausage-fingered ineptitude, know that the boy Chike puts in hours of practice: "I pretty much play every single day."

Rock & Roll All Nite

Back in March he set the world record for the highest score for a single song on Guitar Hero III, racking up 880,920. Since then the title's been stolen by another contender, Daniel Johnson, but only because Chike's Youtube video of his higher score can't be

accepted by Guinness World Records.

Bad news: he doesn't have any secret techniques to pass on to wannabe record breakers – "Just practice a lot" – but he's using his skills to design a new guitar with peripheral producers The Ant Commandos. "I definitely have ideas about what people need in a guitar." It can't come soon enough. Get booted off at one more Guitar Hero party and it's back to thrice-weekly therapy.

See Chris nail it at youtube.com/watch?v=S56pRJltqjw – we'll have more on Guitar Hero: World Tour next issue.

Sharp axe

Here's the first image of the new guitar peripheral for Guitar Hero: World Tour, Activision's Rock Band beater which will hit European stores on 28 October. Note the rectangular bar halfway up the fretboard – you can use this touchpad to alter notes during sustains by moving your fingers along it. It can also be used for finger tapping those extra fast sections. Cool.

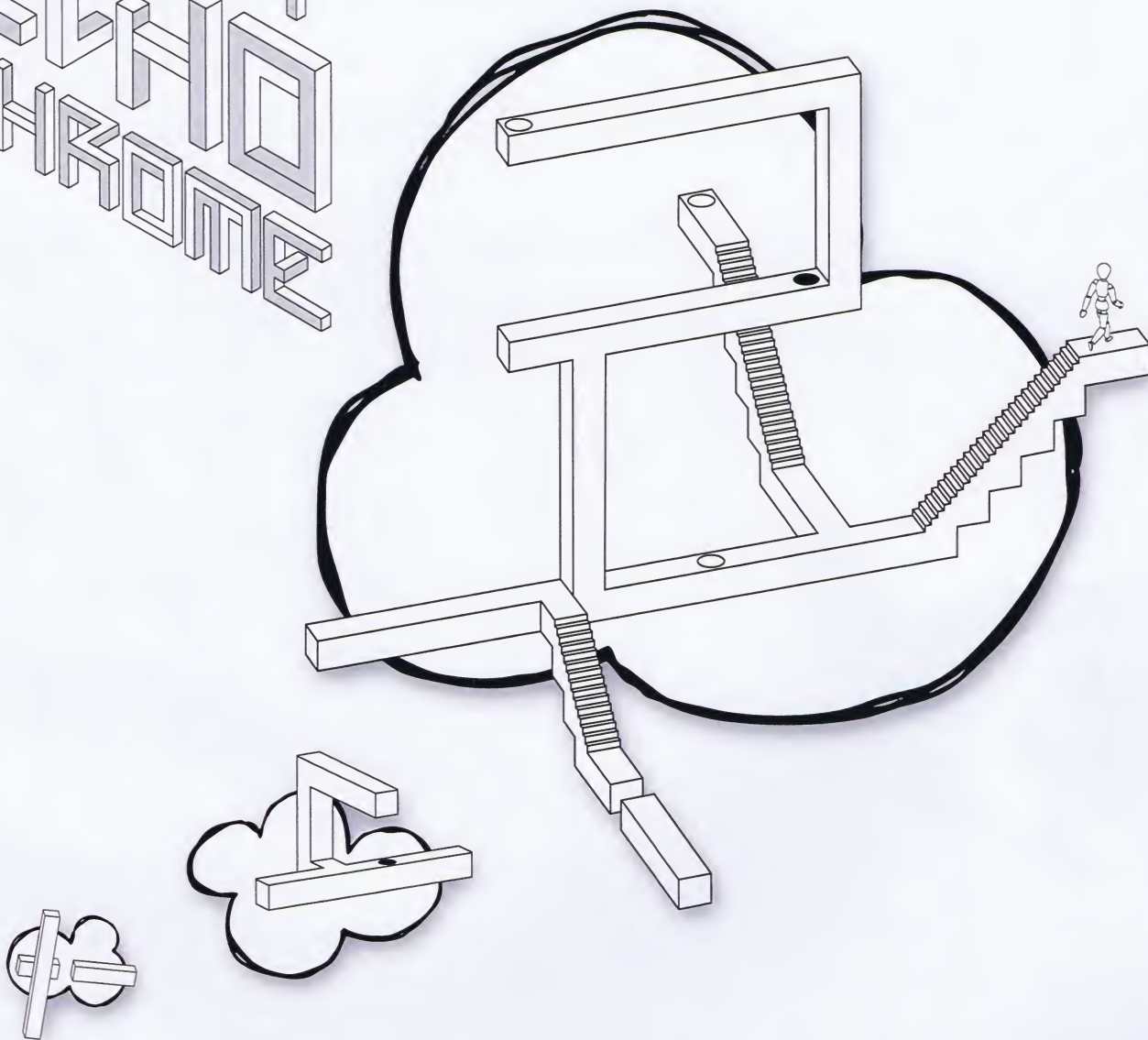




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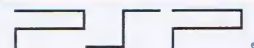
Your brain's mission is to guide the mannequin to its destination by tilting and turning the 3D puzzle and mastering these 5 perspective laws:

- 1) If two separate pathways look like they're touching, they are.
- 2) If a pathway looks like it's above another, it is.
- 3) When the mannequin jumps, it'll land on whatever's beneath it.
- 4) If a gap between two pathways is blocked from view the mannequin can stroll over it.
- 5) If a hole's blocked from view, it doesn't exist.

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echochrome

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PlayStation®Portable



The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about

6

PS3's most exciting game

Resi 5 rocks, and now with less liberal guilt...

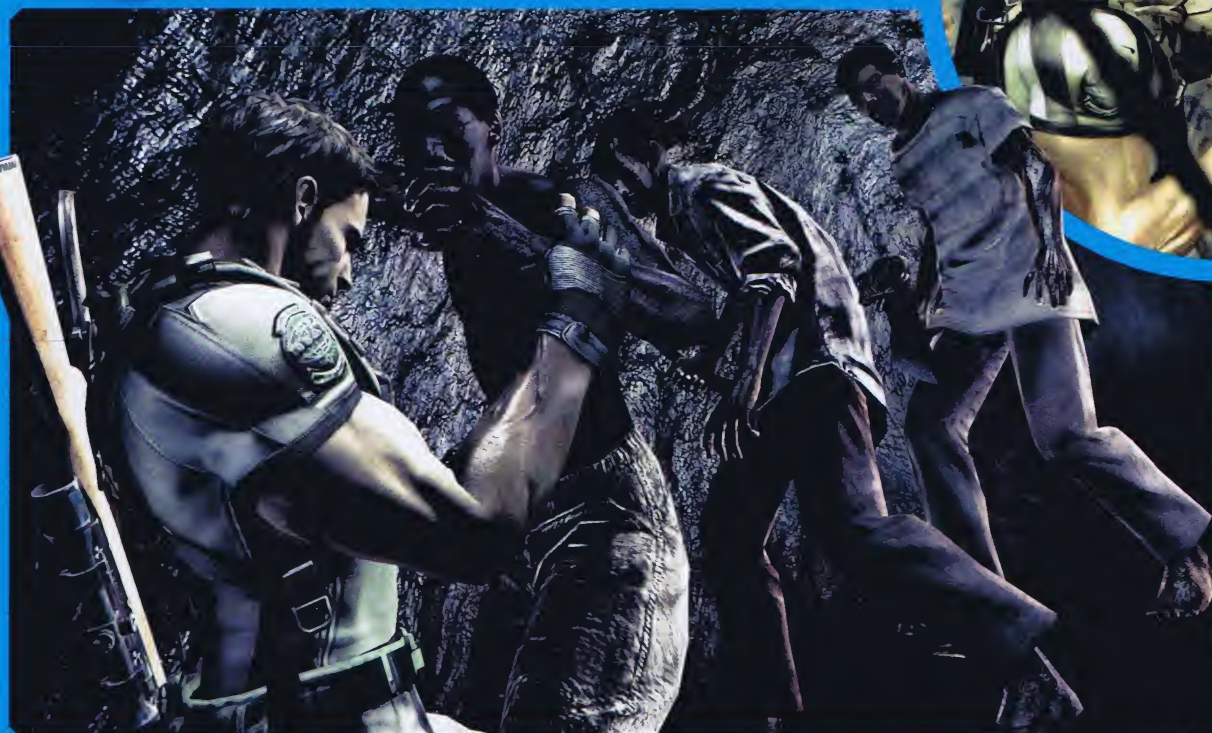
Incredible sun-bleached visuals, terrifying quasi-sexual mouth flaps, and the heady scent of controversy in the air. Yes, right now there isn't a game we're more hot for than Resident Evil 5. We recently had the chance to see it running live, and talk to the developer. "Africa was the birthplace of the progenitor virus, as stated in Code: Veronica," explains lead producer Jun Takeuchi, best known for his work on Lost Planet. "It's also the birthplace of humanity. A lot of people say the game reminds them of Black Hawk Down... but what it reminds *us* of is when we went to Africa to research the game, our impressions of what we saw and felt there. That became the biggest influence in how the game feels."

What he's tiptoeing around is

the controversy over the original E3 trailer, which was accused of having racist overtones due to the white hero mowing down hordes of black zombies. Capcom denies that the game has been redesigned as a result, but there's no denying that Chris' sidekick looks a bit more ethnic than in last year's footage. "We wanted Chris to have a partner who was familiar with the environment," says Takeuchi. "She's been in there since pretty much the beginning." As producer Masachika Kawata battles through one of the early stages, there's also no denying that the not-quite-zombies look more United Colours Of Benetton now. And there's more of them too, although they don't ➤



PS2



■ Certain infected villagers can now unleash frighteningly huge fangs – a bit like Luke Goss in Blade 2.





The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about



■ Capcom claims that the ethnic makeup of the game is consistent with their research trips.



Dev talk

"In horror, seeing things in the light isn't very scary. We're working on making things scary in the light as well as the darkness."

Jun Takeuchi
Chief producer, Capcom

seem any faster: the real threat comes from the axeman seen in the first trailer. He showcases the most impressive new feature – environments are now more destructible, so market stalls, crates, even concrete walls can't protect Chris from his giant cleaver.

Change of direction

"The system in Resi 5 has one major difference from Resi 4," admits Takeuchi-san, "but we're not quite ready to talk about it yet." Hmm, we noticed during the demo that Chris switches guns mid-game, rather than going to his attaché case. This may be a temporary measure, since the menus are being redesigned. What's certain is you still won't be moving and firing at the same time. "One of the things that distinguishes Resi is the sense of fear and foreboding," says Takeuchi. "If you were able to run away from enemies while you shoot and dash about whenever you want to, it would result in a game that is not the game we're trying to make." The battle in the market is certainly impressive, and feels a lot like Resi 4 – no bad thing considering it's one of the best games ever.

We saved the big question for last, though: will the merchant – everyone's favourite Ganado-infected arms dealer – be back? "That's top secret," he laughs. Oh come on, we'll buy it at a high price.

Capcom expects Resi 5 to hit 'this fiscal year' – meaning before April 2009. Hit up residentevil.com for updates.



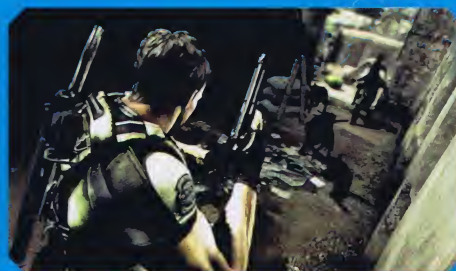
■ Will the mutts be as vicious as the Colmillos in Resi 4? Looks like it.



■ Mr Baghead is back. Magnum round to the knee for you, sir?



■ Explosions – still the best way of cleaning out the infected.



■ Narrow African alleyways make for claustrophobic battles.



Slaves to the game

Key reward centres in a man's brain show greater activation than a woman's while playing videogames.

PS
023

7

The male brain game

Why men need to conquer, but women aren't so fussed

Bet on red

Next time you're heading online for a frag-fest make sure you get on the red team. Scientists at the University of Copenhagen recently studied 1,347 bouts of online UT 2004 and found that red teams won 55% of the time. Neuroscientist Mihai Moldovan reckons this is all to do with red being a psychological distractor for men because it symbolises anger. Blue on the other hand probably just means depression. Or shame. No one is scared of shooting at those.

Scientists may have discovered the reason why gaming remains a male dominated activity – and it's all about brain chemistry. In a surely valuable and in no way likely to cause massive rows piece of research by Prof Allan Reiss of Stanford University, male and female participants were hooked up to an MRI scanner while playing a strategy game in which the implicit aim was to win as much territory as possible, by clicking on balls before they hit a centrally placed wall. Guess what happened...

All in the mind

In both sexes victory stimulated the brain's mesocorticolimbic centre, usually associated with reward and addiction. However, with the male

subjects the activity was much more pronounced, and motivation grew as they gained more territory. Women understood the game and knew how to win, but their pleasure centres remained comparatively unmoved.

"I think it is fair to say that males tend to be more intrinsically territorial," said Reiss of his findings, hinting that games appeal to a primal male instinct for conquest. In his report for the *Journal of Psychiatric Research*, Reiss goes on to suggest, "These gender differences might help explain why males are more attracted to, and more likely to become 'hooked' on, videogames than females." In other words, lads, it's not our fault we spend night after night hitting *Liberty City* for cheap

thrills, we're powerless slaves to our mesocorticolimbic overlords.

We spoke to one of the research team, Fumiko Hoeft, who told us they're planning further work in this area, including repeating the experiment using different types of game and more complex simulations, "that interrogate territoriality." In other words, *why* do men care about dominating virtual landscapes?

Based on our own experience, the research team is likely to get very different results from the female participants if they use a copy of *SingStar Legends* and a couple of bottles of Rosé. Next month: why boys like guns and cars.

Want to find out more about your game-obsessed brain? Read the full report at snipurl.com/2e33a.



The Big 10

Stories everyone's talking about

8 Saints Row 2 goes nuts

Rival crime sequel comes out gunning for GTA IV

If nothing else, you've got to admire Saints Row 2's enormous balls. Rather than try to dodge the inevitable comparisons with GTA IV, the crime sequel's latest trailer openly mocks Rockstar's mega-hit. "Would you rather go bowling," the voiceover asks over rinky dink music before some heavy rock kicks in, "or steal a septic truck and spray loads of sewage on pedestrians?" Erm, bowling sounds okay. "Would you rather go to the cabaret with a friend," it continues, "or inflict serious injuries to your friend to earn a little insurance money?" Uh...

Rival gangs

The trailer culminates with a dig at watching TV in your GTA IV safehouse, before listing all the super awesome stuff you can do in Saints Row 2. Like? Streaking in public, joining a fight club, running security for bands, base jumping, car surfing... There's more, but you probably get the picture.

And though at first it seems nuts to call out such a big-hitting rival, there is some method to the madness. First, nothing is going to stop people comparing the games, so attack may be the best form of defence. Second, it's a direct appeal to punters who missed the parachutes 'n' planes wackiness of San Andreas, which was stripped back by the more serious-minded GTA IV.

Whether that will be enough to spare the critics' rod remains to be seen, but the emphasis in Saints Row 2 is very much on the funny – as evidenced by the fact previous teasers have been presented by Gary 'Madman' Busey, shouting barely coherently at the camera while scenes of mayhem played out in the background. And in case you think THQ is setting itself up for a mighty hard fall with all this, bear in mind that the most recent promo closes on a relatively humble note. "We know you're doing those other things right now," says voiceover man, "and that's fine, but when you're done we'll be right here doing some crazy s***!" Cue the explosions!

Battlefield vs MGS4

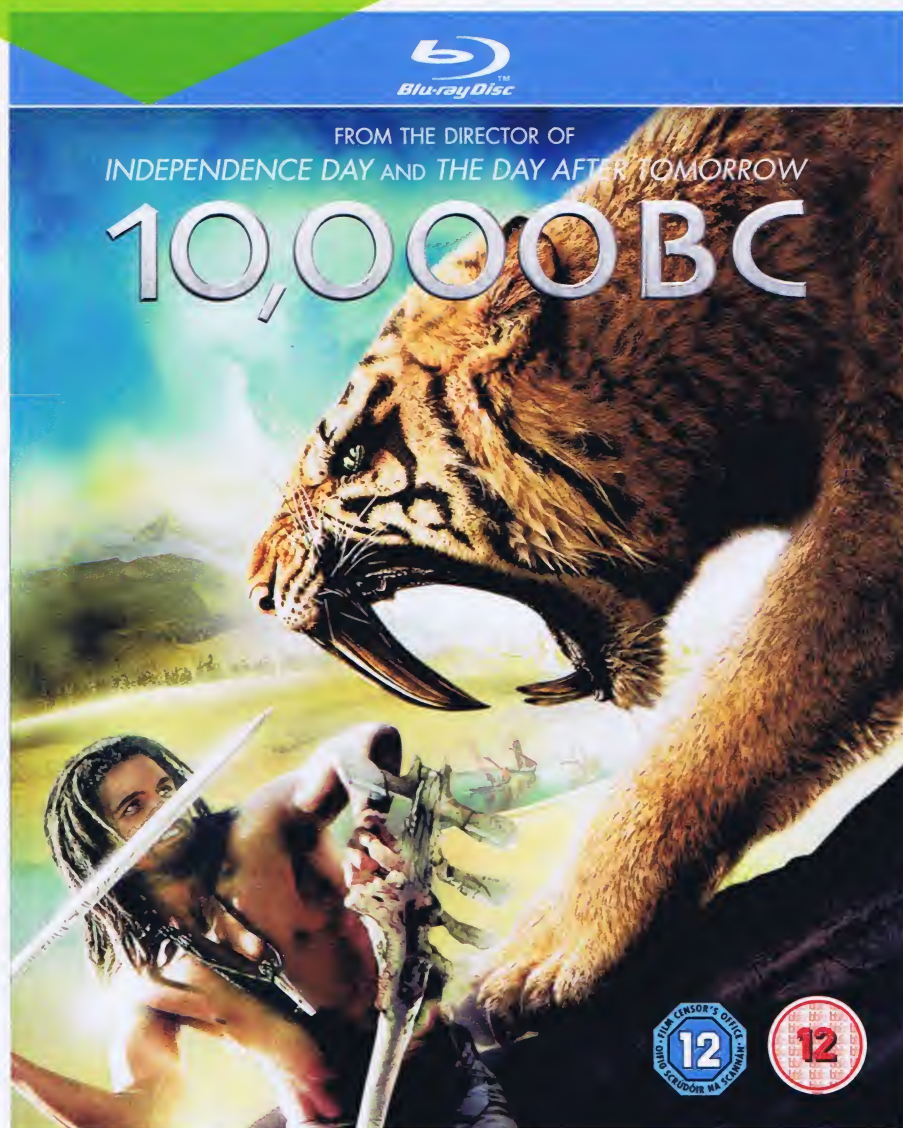
Meanwhile, over in the action genre, Battlefield: Bad Company has also been getting ideas above its station. A video that appeared online days after MGS4's release featured the mouthy mercs taking the mickey out of Snake. "Guys, I'm sure I saw a guy with an eye patch hiding in that barrel!" reports Sweetwater, setting up some gentle jokes about cardboard boxes, "solid metal" and a big red exclamation mark. Brave words – but it might not seem so funny when Kojima lines up his rail gun.

See the promo at snipurl.com/2e9u8 – choose the 'Activities Trailer'.



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9

PS3's flying dog

Linger In Shadows brings the demoscene to PlayStation



The DIY devs

Demo coders have been around since the dawn of home computer software in the early '80s. Back then, they used to illegally copy and distribute computer games, adding their own animated loading screens to their wares. However, as these demonstrations of programming prowess became more impressive, an international demo community developed, with coders competing to push hardware like the Commodore 64 and Amiga to the absolute limits. Now the scene is mostly PC-based, though some still delight in hacking more vulnerable hardware like the Dreamcast, Xbox and PSP to run their own ever more astonishing demos.

When a bizarre PS3 demo was shown earlier this year, it inspired both admiration and confusion among those who'd seen it. Named *Linger In Shadows*, the real-time animation sequence features an eerie mid-air battle between a basset hound and a Lost-style smoke monster. In the background, the environment mixes crumbling Eastern Bloc high rises with an Ancient Greek temple. And, of course, steampunk flying robots.

It soon transpired the piece was the work of Polish demo group, Plastic, a member of the online demoscene, where communities of artists and coders produce visually stunning animated demos on everything from PC to PSP. It's largely an underground phenomenon, but Sony specifically asked Plastic to produce a demo on PS3 hardware. "It was summer two years ago," says Plastic's Michal

Staniszewski. "I received an email from Rusty Buchert and George Weising [producers at SCEA Santa Monica]. They had a plan to provide something new and different on PSN, apart from just games". Buchert refers to *Linger In Shadows* as "interactive digital art" – in the final version, set to be available for download this summer, you'll be able to explore the landscape, collecting objects to open new areas and also accessing 'greetz' – shout-outs to other members of the demoscene. Sony is now working with at least two more demo groups to produce similar projects for download.

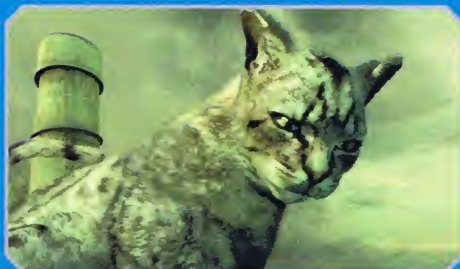
Work in progress

It's an interesting endeavour. Apart from providing thoughtful content for PSN, this is about Sony pushing PS3 as a platform for innovation. It may

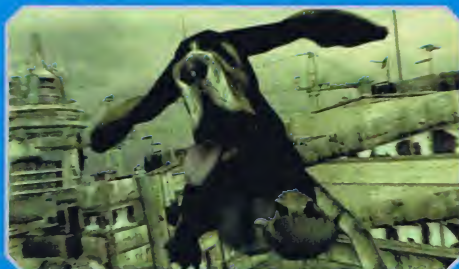
also be an effort to get the demo community interested in the console. Demo coders tend to be brilliant games programmers, able to prise astonishing performance out of hardware by coding directly 'to the metal', rather than relying on the sort of established programming environments which form the basis of mainstream game development. Throughout Continental Europe, where the demoscene remains huge, a large number of studios, including Guerrilla and IO Interactive, employ ex-demo coders.

As with Net Yaroze (the programmable version of PS1) and PS2 Linux, it shows Sony is interested in grassroots programming. Either that, or someone just likes the idea of flying dogs being available on PSN.

Find out more about the underground world which spawned *Linger In Shadows* at demoscene.info.



■ I AM IN UR PS3Z... SCOWLIN. *Linger In Shadows*' own lolcat.



■ This flying pooch gets consumed by an evil smoke monster.



■ The intro is typical demoscene fare: fractals and babes.



10 Should the next GTA be set in Vice City?

OPM wonders where Rockstar's city-circus should go next



Yes

Says neon junkie and Hawaiian shirt-wearing '80s refugee
Dave Harrison

It would be madness to set the next GTA anywhere *other* than Vice City. Remember the speculation about GTA IV's location? Tokyo, Bogota, Staines... None of them were right, then or now.

Vice City made sense after GTA III because it complements Liberty City by being part of the twisted GTA vision of America and contrasts in terms of structure, architecture, climate and culture. Most importantly it's a place that's as bold as GTA itself.

Livin' for the city

Revisiting Vice City doesn't mean Rockstar will repeat itself. Let's see a modern Miami, one that's booming with massive building projects and seething with political intrigue, and still acts as a gateway to America for immigrants and tourists alike.

There's the Everglades, overlooked for the PS2 version, that could offer a new environment as fresh and enchanting as the countryside was in San Andreas. And who wouldn't want to experience a PS3-generated Ocean Drive sunset or an off-shore tropical storm?

Okay, choosing Vice City isn't going off in a daring new direction, but that doesn't mean it's lazy or less creative – it's a place with masses of untapped potential. It's an obvious choice and, as GTA IV showed with Liberty City, the obvious one is often the right one.

If you would like to see GTA V return to Vice City email the word 'YES' to opm@futurenet.co.uk.



No

Says resident forward thinker and variegated landscape fan
Steve Williams

Why go back to Vice City? Everybody there is dead. I distinctly remember running them over while they were on fire. Sure, Rockstar has shown a willingness to revisit old towns – not just with the two 'Stories' games, but with GTA IV – but that's no reason to get trapped in a cycle of repeating locations like an ultra-violent Sunday paper holiday supplement.

Anyway, it's flat. This is perhaps the biggest argument against returning to 'Miami'. All that crazy neon *would* look amazing in the new RAGE engine – providing you like neon in shades of brown – but its highest geographical point is Phil Collins' bald spot.

Run to the hills

And what do we enjoy more than shotgunning a fat cop in the face and blowing his hat off, now we're all so desensitised to violence? Committing a crime on the beach and watching the cops drive off a cliff just to get to us, that's what; cops rolling into the sea like happy dolphins, falling like stones and smashing into the sand.

It's too hard to do this in a city that's as hilly as a flip-flop. Furthermore, Vice City's '80s setting had an element of surprise, and re-exploring the fashions and music was a thrill. Re-exploring it would just be... sigh.

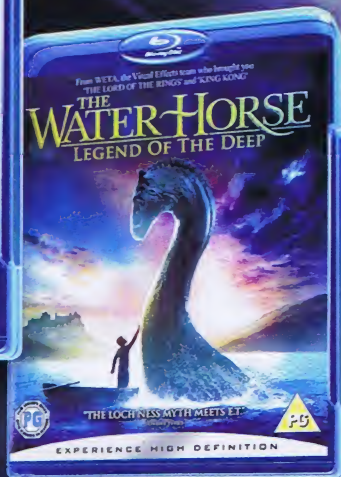
See, Vice City wasn't just a place, it was a time and a state of mind. And while you can easily revisit places, the only state of mind I'll repeat that often is drunkenness. So. Anyway. No.

Think going back to Vice City would be like wearing '80s hand-me-downs? Email 'NO' to opm@futurenet.co.uk.

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Boxing clever?

The enemies in Metal Gear Solid titles have always been able to pick up on and react to Snake's presence, but the AI has hardly moved on since the PS2 era. So have computer-controlled characters reached the limits of their intelligence?

Are PS3 bad guys *really* any brighter?

The ongoing quest to add brains to brawn

A certain amount of stupidity is always going to be necessary in videogames. Grand Theft Auto, for example, would be virtually unplayable if the police remembered throughout the game that you were the guy who slaughtered eight of their colleagues in an unprovoked shotgun rampage earlier in the day.

The problems start when you actually want the computer-controlled enemies

to provide some sort of challenge. Until recently, AI was heavily scripted – enemy soldiers were given specific actions for specific situations. They'd dive for cover, for example, but then they would just sit there waiting for your inevitable grenade attack. More recently, developers have been blending scripted elements with a greater range of dynamic responses. As Alex Champandard of aigamedev.com

Forward thinking

Three games promising to push the AI agenda



Prototype

"AI code is meaningless unless players perceive it. We're working hard to make animation realistic, dynamic and rewarding. Characters will look and sound more intelligent, and provide a much better game experience."

Sergio Garces Casao Lead AI coder, Radical Entertainment



Far Cry 2

"We are now able to afford more intricate tactics and approaches to our AI. For example, our AI agents communicate with each other and try to form tactical groups. Those groups then dispatch roles to each other to co-ordinate their actions."

Dominic Guay Technology director, Ubisoft



Wheelman

"We spent time getting the AI to use vehicles as dynamic cover; finding the best positions, using them as points to advance and withdraw from. It's impossible to script these battles – we tuned the behaviours so they would work systemically."

Nick Davies AI programmer, Midway Newcastle

explains, "In practice, you'll find that run-of-the-mill AI is built using techniques like hierarchical finite-state machines (HFSM). This allows the AI to be very responsive, adaptive and relatively simple to create. But since F.E.A.R., there's been quite a jump in the quality of technology being used by the best studios, and we're starting to see enemy AI soldiers do logical reasoning and even planning..."

F.E.A.R. effect

Monolith's 2005 shooter is enormously influential among AI coders. The game used a technique called GOAP (goal-orientated action planning) to create AI characters able to make simple, improvised decisions. Inspired by this, developers are now edging towards the concept of autonomous agents, AI enemies capable of reacting to game events in real-time and coming up with solutions, based on a range of goals.

Right now, this means that soldiers don't wait for you to engage them – they actively hunt you down. In Uncharted: Drake's Fortune, MGS4 and GRAW 2 enemies employ flanking manoeuvres to outgun you. One step on is characters with simulated sensory systems who can track your position via environmental clues like footprints. In Alone In The Dark, monsters follow your blood trail if you're wounded. Start a fire in Far Cry 2, and your enemies will spot it.

It's in open world games where the most interesting AI advances are being made. Here, enemies *need* to be able to look after themselves, because there are too many variables for a workable scripting system. Far Cry 2's AI drives

enemy behaviour via three needs – 'rest', 'social' and 'duty'. Actions are dictated by whichever of these is most pressing, making them hard to anticipate.

Midway's driving shooter, Wheelman, has a similar system, as AI programmer Nick Davies explains: "Our AI is more goal-driven than scripted. Our characters have simple emotions such as concepts of danger and aggression, which we can use to drive the AI's reasoning and make it able to cope better with dynamic scenarios. Also, with the increased power available to graphics systems, we can show these internal states via facial expressions – shouts of pain, etc. This makes it a lot easier for the player to read the intentions of the AI developer."

Human machines

So yes, PS3 enemies genuinely are smarter. They're more devious, more self-sufficient and more interesting. The next step, scarily enough, is more human. F.E.A.R. coder, Jeff Orkin, now a researcher into Cognitive Machines at MIT, reckons this will be realised by the implementation of Folding@Home-style distributed computing. "Tapping into the network is the key to making progress towards AI that is an order of magnitude more complex. All consoles are online now, with millions of players connected via broadband. We can leverage this network both to distribute processing of AI across the grid, and to gather intelligence by capturing behaviour from the players themselves." A computer enemy that sits and watches the whole of the human race before taking us on? Christ, isn't that how Skynet started?

RUMOUR MACHINE

Insider whispers

Bioshock guru Ken Levine is taking a break from Rapture to work on a brand new X-Com title.



Expect a new Metal Gear game to be announced for PSP soon, titled Metal Gear 3: Revolver Ocelot.



Dead Rising 2 will come to PS3, but this time the zombies will be attacking a desert town, not a mall.

Puzzler Portal 2 will be a prequel to the original game.

According to leaks from ex-LucasArts staff, a Star Wars: Knights Of The Old Republic MMO is already in development.



The new Tony Hawk game for PS3 will use motion controls and a custom board peripheral.

EA is making The Godfather II – it will be playable as a GTA-style sandbox game or a more tactics-focused RTS.





Culture

Stitched up Snake

Meet the Metal Gear seamstress

People are surprised when they see Snake or Revolver Ocelot strolling along the high street. They're *more* surprised when they find out that underneath the costumes and face paint is Sydney DiGiacomo, also known as Atldirtypunk on cosplay.com. "All of the comments and reactions to my costumes are very positive and there's a lot of amazement when they find out I'm a girl."

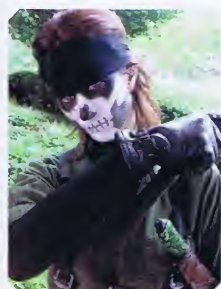
DiGiacomo is, unsurprisingly, a huge Metal Gear fan. "I have been following the Metal Gear series since the NES," she told us. "MGS4 is the main reason why I bought a PS3." She studies the game obsessively to catch every detail of a character's ensemble. Some pieces of the outfits can be bought, but she makes most of them from scratch. "I try my best at making the transfer from game to reality as solid as possible."

MGS4 should provide plenty of inspiration for new outfits, though recreating the chameleon-like Octocamo might prove challenging. We asked which costume she was planning to make first, but DiGiacomo was keeping quiet. "I will have to play it first. That is a rule I have with myself!" Our order for a Raging Raven outfit is already in the post.

◀ From her Georgia home DiGiacomo also makes Castlevania and Devil May Cry costumes

Camo show

More from the MGS wardrobe



Naked Snake
MGS3: Snake Eater



Major Raikov
MGS3: Snake Eater



Solid Snake
Metal Gear Solid

PlayStation under the skin

Gamers show their dedication by getting inked

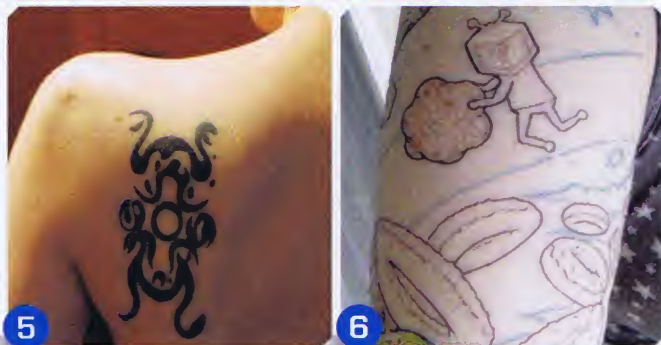
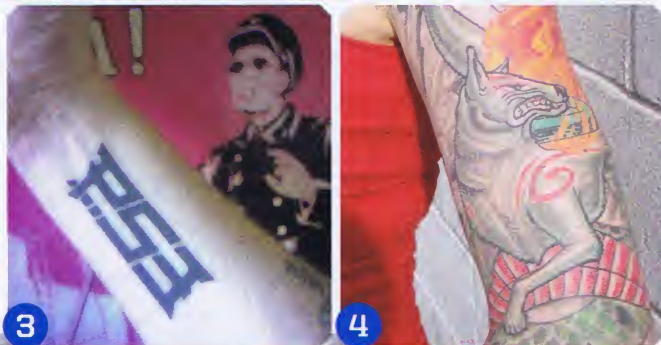


There are many ways to prove your fanboy credentials. Posters, T-shirts, a little light cosplay. But these fans have taken matters to a new, permanent level with tribute tattoos. Some, like the Bioshock chains **1** might not be instantly recognisable, but carve a DualShock **2** on your leg and people will see how seriously you take the console war.

Known as Mobiletone on the threespeech.com forums, Tony Flaxman found fame when he had a PS3 logo **3** tattooed on his arm to celebrate his favourite console. "The video spread over the net faster than a Hilton sex tape."

Some choose more artistic images, like Amaterasu from Okami **4**, a Katamari scene **6** or more cryptic symbols, like Brooke Bolander, who opted for a glyph from Ico and the weak point from Shadow Of The Colossus **5**. She told us, "I wanted a reminder, something that spoke about decisions best left unmade and impulses rather ignored."

Thinking about getting cut? Bolander has a word of warning. "If you let a meth-addicted, jittering tweaker tattoo a lazy-eyed Sephiroth on your pockmarked derriere, I won't hesitate to laugh at you. Do your research."



Got a game tattoo you think is better? Email a picture to us at opm@futurenet.co.uk and if we think it's fierce enough, we'll print it.

WHO SAID THAT?

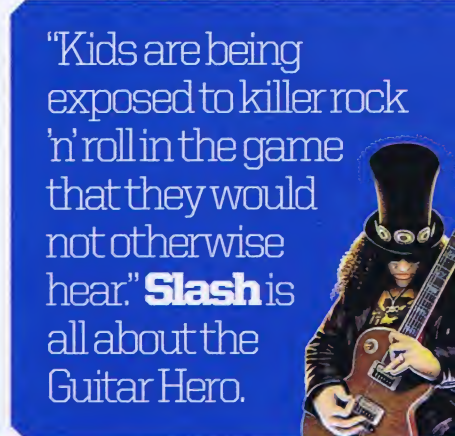
V.I.P. quotes



"They put me in Lycra. I assume that was necessary [and not them having a laugh]," **Ricky Gervais** on his role in GTA



"Make it more like Myst." Ah, now we get why **Matt Damon** isn't in the Bourne game.



"Kids are being exposed to killer rock 'n' roll in the game that they would not otherwise hear." **Slash** is all about the Guitar Hero.

Will Prince Of Persia's new style alienate fans? Producer **Ben Mattes** has a lot riding on it. "I would bet my job that the answer is no."

OPM HOT TOPIC

Which film should get the Lego look next?



Loz Doyle
Producer, Travellers Tales
"Reservoir Dogs. They'd look great in their little suits, but we can't do that because parents see the Lego symbol and they know it's a safe game. We have to be careful about that."



George Wright
Assistant producer, Eidos
"There's a Marvel Avengers movie in the pipeline. I'd think that would make a great Lego game with the variety of superheroes used in the movie."



David Polfeldt
Vice president, Massive Entertainment
"I'd like to see The Golden Compass or the Narnia movies converted into a Lego game (not the best films I know, but nice universes)."



Derek Littlewood
Project lead, Free Radical
"Technically it's not a film, but Doctor Who! Lego Daleks would clearly be the coolest thing ever."

**SPOILER
WARNING**
PlayStation.
Critical Magazine UK



RIP Katie

Tim Clark is so over GTA IV's kind-hearted but dull love interest

Katie McReary deserved to die. Okay, maybe not *deserved*, but I was glad that she caught the bullet bouquet, not Roman, when I completed GTA IV. She just wasn't much fun to hang out with – forever droning on about her hoodlum/ex-terrorist/junkie brothers and seemingly unable to grasp the appeal of either substance abuse or brutal violence. (Admittedly, she was usually drowned out by sirens and the rhythmic thwump, thwump, thwump of pedestrians on the bonnet.) To be honest, she wasn't much of a looker either, what with her Dorothy Perkins cardigan and Physics teacher hair. Why date McDullard when you could hook up with Alex, the emotionally damaged blog princess from Craplist, or Carmen, the Latina hottie who fantasises about sexing the entire Liberty City Swingers batting roster? Loveless sex for the, erm, win.

Anyway, despite the gambling and the atrocious shirts, Roman is family. And after I'd shot up an entire warehouse of Russian thugs to

desperate to talk about it, but any conversation invariably ended with the slower-playing writers going nuts. We're talking fully-grown adults clamping their hands over their ears as if they'd suddenly worked out what those noises coming from mum and dad's room mean. For the record, I killed Playboy X and Frances, but let all the optional ones live. Yup, even Darko Brevic. The scene with him at the airport is amazing. Expecting a double cross (because when *isn't*



■ Hanging out with Katie (right), life is one long funeral.

"Forever droning on about her hoodlum brothers..."

rescue his kidnapped ass, I wasn't about to let him get popped at his wedding. Sure, the point of Katie's arc is to offer Niko a shot at redemption, but that would mean a proper job, baby Bellics and no more shooting up the Cluckin' Bell just for the lulz. Definitely do not want. So once I'd savoured the bittersweet finale it was back to stealing cars to order and whacking out random strangers just because a man on a payphone is paying shiny dollars. You say 'grieving process', I say 'good times'. Okay, there was a *slight* twang of remorse when I called Packie and he seemed a bit sad smiley face about the whole dead sister thing. Particularly coming so soon after his brother had been ventilated – by me – with a sniper rifle, but nothing a big night on the Pißwasser couldn't fix.

Who you decide to kill, and why, in GTA IV is fascinating. After completing the game I was

there one?) I rocked up in a Cognoscenti with The Journey on loud and Dwayne's gangsters riding shotgun. Then: nothing. Just a pitiful bag of bones begging to die on the Tarmac. Some nemesis.

The decision feels weighted in favour of not shooting Darko. The message being: do this, and you're just like him. So I actually felt good driving away, leaving him to his demons. And also excited, because this kind of moral decision-making has huge potential that so far has only been hinted at by the likes of Bioshock and Splinter Cell: Double Agent. For some though, it may prove too much. When I finally spoke to one of our regular contributors about the Darko choice, he agreed that not shooting had been the right thing to do, but admitted that afterwards he was so full of directionless rage that he gunned down half a dozen pedestrians. For God's sake nobody tell Dr Tanya Byron.

MY GUILTY PLEASURE



For Paul Fitzpatrick, **Turok's** charm is far from extinct

“ While the Ice Age of withering public opinion has long since frozen dinosaur-meets-merc shooter Turok in a gigantic glacier of meh, I still regularly find myself twanging the game's rent-a-goons in the face with my bow and dancing around in fountains of velociraptor blood, celebrating another gratuitous, Hostel-grade lizard kill. No, Turok isn't very polished – turning dinos on the mercs doesn't work and you have to wonder who helps the dumbass AI get dressed. What Turok is, however, is gleeful, lobotomised fun. Unlike most other shooters, it has the good sense never to take itself seriously or bore the player. I'm looking at you Rainbow Six. ”





Tokyo Flash Infection

Light up your wrist like a fruit machine and turn telling the time into an infatigating puzzle. "Got the time, mate?" "Yeah, it's, uh, half past green..."

£66

tokyoflash.com

Fanatec Porsche 911 Wheel

Obviously, you've got the new 998 on order, but until that arrives enjoy a vicarious taste of the finest in German automotive manufacturing in the form of this satisfyingly robust wheel.

£240

fanatec.de



Beats By Dr Dre

These fancy cans have been aurally tweaked by the good doctor to ensure righteous bass. (Because, hey, he's got to pay for Eminem's doughnut habit somehow.)

£200

monstercable.com/beats



Want that

Lust-have kit for PlayStation people

Pagani Stereo System

If you can't afford the Zonda this supercar specialist is famous for, you probably don't have the dollar for their carbon fibre audio equipment either.

ETBA

paganiautomobili.it



Tomy iSobot

The smallest humanoid robot in production, and the best way to confirm your status as a massive toy-loving man child.

£200

worldwideshoppingmall.co.uk

Metal gear

No Octocan variants, but to get 20% off the new range of MGS t-shirts, and all other merch on the uni's site, enter the code 'playstationmag' in the basket section during checkout.*

£12.99

uniglo.co.uk



Prices and availability of products are all correct at time of going to press

*20% off code valid from 1 June until 31 July 06. One discount per person, per transaction. Not valid in conjunction with any other offer. Does not apply to post and packaging.



Why do PS3 games have to be installed?

And with times creeping up, should we worry?

Why do some high profile releases demand you squeeze large amounts of game data onto your hard drive before you play? Devil May Cry 4 kicked things off with its whopping 20-minute install, followed by GTA IV and Haze, both clocking up over seven minutes. Now Metal Gear Solid 4 has not just one eight-minute opening install, but a series of three-minute top-ups spread across the game. Hundreds of outraged gamers have hit the forums, some complaining about having to wait before playing, others about their hard drives filling to bursting point as each new release spoons gigabytes of fatty game code into their PS3's data gob.

The waiting game

The reasoning behind these installs is that it's quicker to grab game data from the hard drive than the Blu-ray disc, which means shorter loading times during play. As Dr Andrew Perella, chief software architect at Eutechnyx, explains, "The biggest benefit of loading data from hard drive as opposed to Blu-ray is that the seek times are lower. Games that make use of a lot of user customisation (eg racing games where you can apply upgrades and custom paint jobs) are hit particularly hard by this as the developer cannot

know ahead of time what will need to be loaded." So are we facing a future in which every new title dumps itself onto your drive like an unwelcome house guest? Probably not. Right now, only a fraction of games require an install – big, lovely-looking titles like Uncharted: Drake's Fortune and Call Of Duty 4 manage without one, so it's unlikely your hard drive will fill up any time soon.

Also, developers are taking a more pro-active approach to Blu-ray's data transfer tech. Some are duplicating frequently-required data around the disc so it can be located and loaded up quicker. Others are working with streaming methods that load data while you're playing. Developer Bethesda spoke out against mandatory installs, insisting there would be none in its forthcoming post-apocalyptic romp, Fallout 3. Bethesda's Pete Hines told us, "We get around it by doing the caching to the hard drive behind the scenes. And yes, we do have more than one copy of data on the disc in different locations to make the streaming process faster."

So, as developers learn more about PS3 and Blu-ray technology, installs *should* be a thing of the past. Until then, use the time productively. Some light reading, yoga, or a minute to reflect on why you bought Haze in the first place...

Install watch

We took six games with mandatory installs, grabbed a stopwatch and timed them as they invaded our hard drive. See how they fared on our unique 30-min clockface.



21m 41s

Devil May Cry 4

Over 20 minutes for 4,834MB. Is the data being transmitted in Morse code?

A brief history of space

How videogame media has grown up over the years



32 KB
NEScart
(1983-2003)



660 KB
Cassette tape
(1977-'80s)



114 MB
3.5" floppy disc
(1983-'90s)



700 MB
CD-ROM
(1984-present)



4.7-17 GB
DVD
(1996-present)



25-50 GB
Blu-ray
(2006-present)

PLAYSTATION TOP 10 CHARTS

This month's heroes and zeroes

▲ Up ▼ Down ● Non mover + New entry

PS3

- + Metal Gear Solid 4
Guns Of The Patriots
- Grand Theft Auto IV
- ▼ Lego Indiana Jones
The Original Adventures
- ▼ Race Driver Grid
- ▼ Haze
- ▼ Gran Turismo 5 Prologue
- ▼ Call Of Duty 4
Modern Warfare
- + Civilization Revolution
- UEFA Euro 2008
- ▼ Dragon Ball Z Burst Limit

Source chart-track.co.uk

PS2

- Lego Indiana Jones
The Original Adventures
- UEFA Euro 2008
- Guitar Hero III
Legends Of Rock
- Iron Man
- + Silent Hill Origins
- The Sims 2 Castaway
- ▼ Ratchet & Clank SM
- PDC WC Darts 08
- ▲ Sega Superstars Tennis
- Dragon Ball Z
Budokai Tenkaichi 3

Source chart-track.co.uk

PSP

- + Lego Indiana Jones
The Original Adventures
- ▼ Iron Man
- ▼ God Of War
Chains Of Olympus
- ▼ UEFA Euro 2008
- Need For Speed Pro Street
- ▼ WWE SVR 2008
- ▼ Medal Of Honor Heroes 2
- MX Vs ATV Untamed
- ▼ The Simpsons Game
- ▲ The Sims 2 Castaway

Source chart-track.co.uk



7m 25s

Haze

Seven minutes to install
3,619MB is just acceptable.



8m

MGS4

This 4,600MB data chunk
is just the first of several.



8m 22s

GTA IV

Over eight minutes for a
mere 3,339MB? Sloppy.



13m

Bourne Conspiracy

4,681MB in the time it would
take Jase to deactivate an
improvised nuclear device.



13m 20s

GT5 Prologue

Also available as a
PSN download so the
5,880MB is, perhaps,
understandable.

The PlayStation entertainment plan

Never spend a moment unfulfilled with our monthly guide

Monday



Tuesday

JULY 08

Funeral music

Let Band Of Horses soothe your worries with some mournful indie rock at the Shepherds Bush Empire. Wait, why do I feel even sadder? bandofhorses.com

Wednesday



Thursday

10

Issue 21 on sale

And you're clutching it right now. Send your questions, poetry and random demands to opm@futurenet.co.uk.

Friday

11

Tea time

Pack your Tetley and head north for Hot Chip, The Kooks and Rage Against The Machine at the T In The Park festival. tinthepark.com

Saturday

Sunday



14

Watch, man

Influential comic book writer, Alan Moore, discusses his Lost Girls series at the South Bank centre's Purcell Room. snipurl.com/2tz8x

15

Electric dreams

It might be smaller these days, but E3 is still where it's at when it comes to big game announcements and industry intrigue. e3.spa.com



17

Line up

The Latitude Festival has it all with Sigur Ros, Interpol, Phil Jupitus and Iain Banks all showing off their respective talents. latitudefestival.co.uk

18

Robot emotion

Tear ducts of steel? Check out Pixar's latest flick, Wall-E, about a waste allocation robot that learns to love. disney.go.com/disneypictures/walle



LOST GIRLS



Alan Moore
Melinda Gebbie



25

Knight time

Christian Bale returns as Batman and the late Heath Ledger stars as The Joker in The Dark Knight, which hits UK cinemas today. thedarknight.warnerbros.com

28

First blood

Get all nostalgic about childhood, summer holidays and Sly Stallone as Brit flick Son Of Rambow arrives on Blu-ray. sonoframbow.com

29

Beach boys

Head to Brighton to hear Media Molecule, Ninja Theory, EA and Traveller's Tales talk games, guns and Lego. develop-conference.com



31

Touche

Scour the menu options to see if Darth Vader can somehow be turned off when you pick up the same-but-still-excellent Soulcalibur IV today. soulcalibur.com

AUG 01

Cool down

The Big Chill Festival lies back, relaxes and enjoys performances from Beth Orton, Leonard Cohen and The Mighty Boosh. bigchill.net

02

Circuit training

Calling all leather fetishists, it's the second day of the Hannsperre SBK Superbike World Championship at Brands Hatch. worldsbk.com

03

Bowled over

Cross your fingers and pray for rain/sun, it's the last day of the third test as England take on South Africa. esb.co.uk

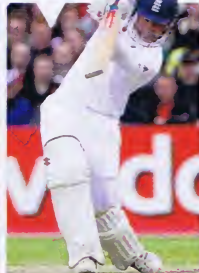
04

Surfs up

Why, Newquay, you spoil us. The Ripcurl Boardmasters Championships and Unleashed music festival start today. ripcurlboardmasters.com



06 August
Issue 22 on sale.
Subscribe now
on page 110





Win an HDTV

With Soulcalibur IV on PS3

Get ready to drop your guns and pick up a lengthy steel blade – Namco's legendary sword-based brawler arrives on PS3 this month. Familiar names like Cervantes and Ivy return, along with new faces. There's online play for the first time in the series, and PS3 players get an added playable character on loan from the Star Wars universe, Lord Vader himself. To celebrate, we're giving you a shot at a brand new HDTV, PS3 and a copy of the game. En garde!

Which of these characters guest-starred in Soulcalibur III on PS2?

A HEIHACHI MISHIMA **B RYU** **C ADAM MORGAN**

Text your answer to 87474 using the word Soul followed by a space, then your answer A, B or C followed by a space, then your name and address, or email us at opm@futurenet.co.uk. One winner will be drawn from correct entries at random. The closing date is 6 August 2008.

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FIVE YEARS AGO IN OPM

This month we visit **OPS2 #36**

It might look like mindless kids broke into the OPM office and redesigned the cover of issue 36 while hopped up on sherbet, but actually we had it graffiti'd ourselves in preparation for our big **Tony Hawk's Underground** reveal (this being five years ago when urban cool was still, well, sort of cool). Other big announcements included Sony's cross-media megalith **PSX**, a TV-tuning, hard-drive recording, DVD-burning super-PS2 which never made it out of Japan thanks to low sales and a hefty price tag (£500 – feel better about that PS3 mortgage now?).

Elsewhere, then-Online editor Timmy had his picture taken with Irish thesp **Gabriel Byrne** (nothing to do with PS2, but then nor was the internet back then), and we came up with several reasons why the new **Colin McRae** and **Bond** games wouldn't just be more of the same. ('Upgraded parts now require proper testing in new sub-games' we explained, clearly going for the Kwik-Fit employee angle.)

Previews took in **True Crime: Streets Of L.A.** ('Almost an exact copy of GTA, we admitted, adding that if it was any good 'we won't hold that against it'), **Jak II: Renegade** ('Slicker than an Armani, er, oil slick') and **Dog's Life** ('It'll probably only sell 25 copies'). The excitement in reviews, meanwhile, involved waving our hands about in front of the telly like a burning monkey as we got hold of the revolutionary **EyeToy Play** ('It'll be even better next time around' – 8/10) with a little left over for **Mace Griffin: Bounty Hunter** ('One of the most compelling games of the year' – 8/10) and, er, **Starsky & Hutch**, which jive-talked its way to a 7/10 thanks to its moreish shoot-and-drive mechanic. Until next month!

FIVE MINUTE SKIVE

Games to play when the boss isn't looking



Toon Crisis

Run around Soho blasting cartoon monsters with your magical finger. All the fun of a hallucination with none of the fairly serious mental health implications. Has some great music by gypsy punk band, Gogol Bordello. tooncrisis.com



The Several Journeys Of Reemus

Hippy insect exterminator Reemus grabs Liam his purple bear (this isn't a euphemism) and embarks on a short but challenging point-and-click adventure. snipurl.com/2f04d



The Morning After













Waking up with a hangover doesn't usually involve puzzle-solving. Here though, you must chat to goths, collect items and play mini-games. More fun than taking two aspirin and whining all day. snipurl.com/2f08f







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|--|---|
|  Sweet Emotion |  Movin' Out |
|  Dream On |  Walk This Way (Run DMC) |
|  Make It |  Back In The Saddle |
|  Love In An Elevator |  Toys In The Attic |
|  Mama Kin |  Nobody's Fault |
|  Train Kept A Rollin' |  Ragdoll |

AND ALSO FEATURING

- | | |
|---|---|
|  Lenny Kravitz |  Joan Jett and the Blackhearts |
|  The Clash |  The Cult |

AND MORE!!



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A vibrant, stylized illustration of a five-piece rock band performing on stage. The lead singer, a woman with long brown hair and sunglasses, is in the center, singing into a microphone with a tiger-print scarf. To her left, a man with long blonde hair plays an electric guitar. Behind her, a man with spiky blonde hair plays drums. To her right, a woman with blonde hair plays a yellow and black electric guitar. In the foreground, a man with long dark hair plays a yellow electric guitar. The background is a dark stage with purple and red lighting and a large, ornate, stylized 'W' logo.

Walk This Way

OUT NOW



PlayStation®2

PLAYSTATION 3



XBOX 360^{LIVE}

Wii™

feature

Little Big Planet





In an exclusive visit to developer Media Molecule, we find out why **Little Big Planet** is going to change the way people play games forever. Let's get to work!

Alex Evans, co-founder of Media Molecule, is wearing odd socks and carrying a printout of an oil derrick he's just downloaded from Google image search. "Right – let's do this thing properly," he says, returning to his seat in the small first floor demo room in the studio's home above The Wilky Bathroom Centre in Guildford. For the last half hour we've been trying to recreate desolate film epic *There Will Be Blood* using the impossibly loveable create-and-share marvel that is *Little Big Planet* – and things just got serious.

Skip back a little earlier and Alex is showing off a blank level and asking what I want to build. My plan includes a church, some cactuses, a giant milkshake (*obviously*) and the aforementioned derrick. Alex pulls a background out of his neon-lasso 'Pop-It' menu. Suddenly, the empty space in which our sackboy characters are standing – as a tribute to the movie's demonic oil man, Daniel Plainview, mine is rocking a black suit, top hat and twizzling moustache – becomes a dusty desert canvas. How did our level pan out? Turn over to see...



One we made earlier

It took us two hours and the help of Media Molecule's Alex Evans to make what you see here. Ladies and gentlemen, we present OPM's Little Big Planet interpretation of *There Will Be Blood*...



Rock bottom

Everything in the extreme foreground and background – like these rocks, and the giant cactuses (cacti? Whatever) come as part of the desert backdrop.

"I'm finished!"

An enormous spoilerific skittle in homage to the film's delirious bowling alley ending. If it looks a bit wrong it's because it was drawn freehand with only a few seconds of building time left. It's here purely for decoration.

Church Of The Third Revelation

Shaping the church initially took ages – I was drawing it all manually. Alex took over and simply whacked down a massive block of wood, rotated the cursor and laid down another to make the roof. The lesson – there's more than one way to make a turn of the century Spiritualist house of God, and I should maybe do an evening course in architecture.





"I DRRRINK IT UP!"

The inevitable milkshake. The shake itself is made from dozens of points balls thrown into a makeshift container. The straw acts as a bridge from a small barrier, painted red using a sticker of an apple.



Stop/start

This is the points weigh-in, and it appears at the end of every level. All the players' sackboys pile on and their points appear on-screen – whoever has the most is the winner (on our level, almost certainly whoever gets to the milkshake first).



"I'm an oil man..."

The derrick! In the end it looks more like the one from Google than from the film, but at least it's integrated into the gameplay: as the derrick pumps, players need to use the attached swing to heave themselves over the burning stretch of oil to the other side.



How does your garden grow?

Hand-traced cactuses made from green sponge. To add variety, two different models were flipped, decorated and resized in various ways. ➔

Mouthpiece

You can place mouths on any item, and when activated they'll deliver clues or mission info. This one advises passing Sackboys to use the derrick to avoid the oil.



How it works...

Your complete guide to Little Big Planet – from its beautiful interface to the Facebook-style social networking

Alex and I are engaged in an in-depth back-and-forth about what shape the derrick should be. I'm sketching a makeshift outline of the tower frame using a rusty metal material, while he tries to make the top bit out of black rubber and comes up with what we both agree looks like a terrifying mutant penis. And that's when we decide that a spot of Googling is in order...

Hands down, this is what's most fun about Little Big Planet. Not the nuts and bolts creation stuff, although it's clearly poised to become a life-swallowing time-sink. And not the game's ready-made levels, either,

glances to all afternoon as he energetically reveals and explains dozens of new features and ingenious touches that push right up to the limits of what Sony's marketing men are ready to unveil about the game, and maybe a little further.

This stuff is nothing short of astonishing. First of all we play some of the single-player game. The level select screen is still a cardboard box spaceship – now officially called 'the pod' – orbiting a craftwork Earth. Different bits of the world represent different levels, while the moon houses all your own works in progress, and a big cork planet with pins in enables you to access news, friends

"What's most fun is actually the talking, planning and scheming."

even though they're much stronger than initially expected. What's most fun is not really doing anything at all – it's *talking* about doing stuff, it's all the planning and scheming and discussing.

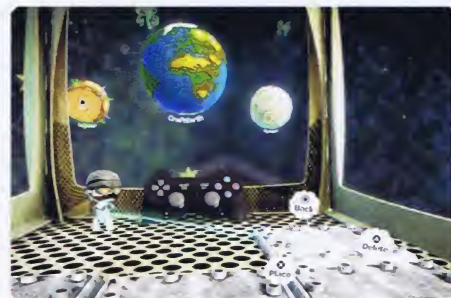
See, the game is totally geared towards easy-access communal experiences, or in other words, having fun together. That's why it offers online level building with up to four people from all over the world. And it's also why everyone in the room while we're building our craft version of the oil-rich American plains is drawn into the process; the Sony product manager even gets out his chair during a discussion about which pivot we should use to make the derrick pump realistically and animatedly outlines his plans on the TV screen. It's this same product manager that Alex gives 'Is this okay?'

and online options. The most exciting thing here is that the pod is fully customisable – you can cover it in stickers or design furniture to make it look any way you like. And as it acts like a pre-game lobby for online play, whenever you're hosting a game your mates will be able to see it too.

As for the levels themselves, they put to bed any residual fears that Little Big Planet's single-player mode would be all muck-about momentum rather than intricate challenges. It's all a question of design and creativity – the tools required to generate tons of gameplay ideas are included in the game, you just have to use them. For example, one jungle-themed level I saw had a continuous stream of wooden cut-out buffalo moving across a conveyor belt floor. The belt carries them over the edge of a precipice and into a pit lined



Don't despair – even if your level starts off unusually brown you can use stickers to brighten the place up.



If you're rocking the Killzone 'Sackghast' look, the chances are you'll want to re-do your pod in industrial rivets.

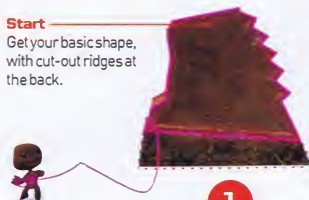
with snapping crocodiles that lurch out to attack as each buffalo falls past. How do they know when to bite? Paired proximity switches are fixed to each animal – when the buffalo get close enough (a distance decided by the level's creator) the croc is triggered.

Other switches and items allow for almost endless gameplay variation, given the right combination of imagination and know-how. You can make keys to open doors or activate jumps and swings, and place them into items that Sackboy will have to carry if he wants to progress. There are pressure switches which require every players' weight to trigger a gate or, better yet, open a bonus room, meaning all the Sackboys are forced to gather in the same spot before sprinting to nab the points. There are several types of lever – differently shaped horizontal and vertical designs, and even

Step-by-step

Basic building is super simple. You select a material in the menu, then choose the shape you want to use – square, circle or triangle. The right stick rotates and scales the object, the left stick moves it, and **X** fixes it in place. Pressing **O** instead cuts material away, allowing you to make irregular shapes and edges. Patterns and stickers can also be slapped on to objects at any point. The edit mode can be paused while you fiddle with fast-moving mechanisms, and rewind (with a cool VHS effect) if you want to undo. Want an example of how to build something and slot it into a level? Take a look at our wooden croc by numbers.

Start
Get your basic shape, with cut-out ridges at the back.



Edit
Use **O** to hollow out the middle to make room for moving parts.



Slide
Colour green, and slide the fitted piston into the body.





▲ It goes without saying that the submarine for this underwater adventure level comes in tiger print. Why would you choose anything else?

analogue variations which map how fast the player moves the right stick onto the speed of the lever's action (we briefly discussed using one of these on our level to make oil spurt from the ground slower or faster depending on how it was controlled).

It's with the creation of 'plans' and 'emitters' that depth becomes clear. These are intricate devices with multiple properties attached – something like the crocodile at the bottom of the page, say. Once designed, you save these by highlighting them with Sackboy's lasso and hitting the 'Plan' option in the menu. It's then stored as a blueprint which will assemble itself whenever it's opened by you or anyone else. Don't worry though – you can copyright plans, so when you send them to a friend (either through the game or just as an attachment to a regular PSN message) or

publish it online, whoever ends up using it will always know that it came from you.

Emitters, on the other hand, are used to build complex gameplay. They're basically programmable points in your level which spit out plans or ready-made items at set intervals. So you could make a burning rock, save it as a plan, then have 20 emitters in the sky rain them down on the Sackboys below. Whoever stays alive collecting points longest wins.

It's only when you start playing with this stuff that the true possibilities become apparent. Keeping track of it all will be the game's social network-style

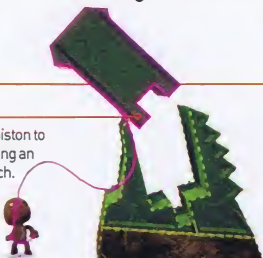


▲ The 'Pop-It' menu makes finding items and materials easy.

online community. Media Molecule want to connect people using the plans and levels they build. Not only will they bear the author's name, but you'll be able to take pictures of yourself playing the game and tag them just like Facebook. In other words, you'll be able to see not only who's playing your level, but how they're playing it.

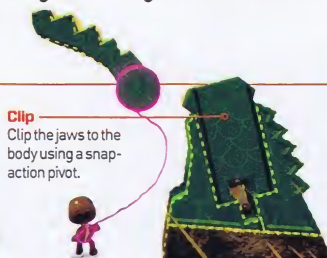
Exciting, right? Of course it is – Little Big Planet is about designing, building and playing together in a totally new and brilliant way. It's absolutely going to change the way you use your PS3 forever. Coming soon: our Blade Runner level... ➔

Fix
Attach the piston to the base using an elastic switch.



4

Clip
Clip the jaws to the body using a snap-action pivot.



5



6





Interview

Media Molecule's Alex Evans on PS3 peripherals, designing a design engine and the evolution of Sackboy

OPM There seems to be a conscious decision to use as much of the PS3's capabilities as possible – the camera, Sixaxis, HDD, online. Is this a deliberate effort to show what the machine is capable of, or just a natural fit with what the game's trying to do? Is Sony keen for you to push these features?

Alex Evans It's a very natural fit. Any technology that Sony can give us to increase the number of ways that users can interact with our game, the better. User-generated content makes pretty high demands not just

on the raw power of consoles, but on the way that users can interact with them. So this is not so much about power as it is about empowerment. **Motion sensing and cameras are both really powerful tools to empower players to express themselves. In the case of Sixaxis, it gives the players a very direct and physical way to express themselves.** A microphone and headset gives players the ability to easily communicate, and it's hard to overstate how valuable this is if you're trying to make something with a friend who is living on the other side of the planet.

A camera gives the player an easy way to get quality new content into LBP that feels really personal and immediately differentiates your creations from anyone else's. A hard disk means you don't need to worry about data storage, which becomes fundamentally important if you're making a new creation in LBP. You want to know that whatever you make is kept safe for you so you can easily come back to it later. One of the great joys of making an exclusive PS3 title is that we get to use all these cool technologies and really play to the strengths of the PS3's peripherals.



Motion sensor puppetry

Little Big Planet uses the Sixaxis to control Sackboy like a digital marionette – tilt the pad and your character tilts his head the same way. In combination with analogue stick controls, which move each arm individually when you're holding the shoulder buttons, it's the most intuitive system we've seen.



Sticker snaps

Using the PS Eye players can take pictures of absolutely anything and use them as stickers in the game. Effectively this means an endless supply of textures, costumes, colour and patterns to use in making your own levels, though inevitably for some people this will mean 'pictures of my knob'. Expect a rigorous report and removal policy.



PREPARE YOURSELF FOR

THE DARK KNIGHT

IN CINEMAS JULY 24TH

TM & © DC Comics

OPM How much of the development time has been focused on building the core of the game, and how much on building levels and the single-player element? Do these require a totally different design skillset?

AE The two aspects of the development process have gone very much hand-in-hand. As we've been making the creative tools, we've been seeing what the designers make with them which in turn inspires further changes to the tools. In all stages of the games design, we have made sure that the 'level designers' and 'core game designers' are in each other's meetings. Still, the majority of effort has been focused on the core rules of the gameplay and creative tools. These form the building blocks for the user's creations. While we're pretty proud of the quality of levels that we've made, we haven't made any levels that users couldn't make themselves with enough time and effort.

We fully expect that the PS3 owners out there will come up with better and more varied ways to use these building blocks.

The key to the game has always been to empower the users.

OPM It'd be really interesting to hear if there was anything that was planned or considered and then rejected. Did Sackboy go through an evolutionary design process, or was he conceived as he is now?

AE Sackboy went through a very long and winding design process. In his very first incarnation, he was a simple 2D geometric figure composed of a couple of squares and triangles in rather ugly shades of yellow and purple. At this time, he was used for simple gameplay tests in early prototypes. Before long, we started trying to design a more loveable character. The idea of him being made out of material was arrived upon fairly early, but everything else about him was

debated. We ended up with four or so different visual concepts from different people in the company. Some of them had legs that stopped at the knees. Others were much more amorphous and sack-like. I think violence may have been employed to find a single design that suited everyone.

After this, we gave complete design control of the character to Francis our sole character artist, animator and costume designer – there's only so long that design-by-committee can have value. More detailed iterations continued for a few weeks before we were happy with him. We tried to achieve a character that is both instantly recognisable, and simple enough to not overpower the character customisations that the players might choose. Again, the mantra of empowering the users was constantly in our minds through the whole process. There are rumours that the prototype visuals for sackboy may be hidden somewhere in the game for you to unlock...



Broadcast yourself

To help players navigate through what could quickly become a sea of mostly terrible user-created content, Sony is planning a system of Youtube-style channels and rankings, which will enable them to quickly browse and download the highest rated new levels and items.



Intelligent design

Design work on Sackboy has only been stopped recently. When we played the game in February Media Molecule weren't sure if and how he would die during levels. Now he can be frozen (and dragged as an ice-cube), electrocuted, burned and crushed. No fluffy gore, though – he just evaporates.

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Preview

64

DEAD SPACE

We get the fear on a derelict spaceship infested with zombie aliens. Luckily the particle cannon is set to 'extra crispy'.

PlayStation® Official Magazine - UK Previews

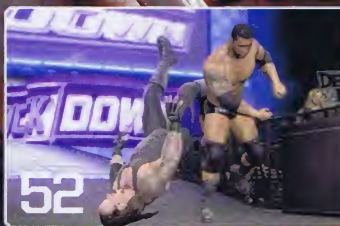
Latest info on Planet PlayStation's hottest games

There's a lot of wrongness this month. The worst offender is Dead Space (p64), a game that won't be happy until it's made you dab away a speck of sick from the corner of your mouth. From zombie babies to men skinned alive, it's the nastiest game we've played since... well, Siren.

Then there's Splatterhouse (p57) where you wear a magical murder mask, gain monstrous super powers and get medieval on the legions of Hell using anything from a meat cleaver to a piece of wood with a nail in it. Technically, you're the good guy.

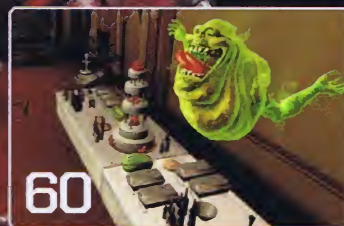
And let's not forget Mortal Kombat vs DC Universe (p58). The fatalities might be gone, but you can still pound Superman through a wall or beat the frown off Batman's face.

It's not all nasty, though. There's the comedy fisticuffs of Facebreaker (p56), for example, and Pure (p62) which could challenge Motorstorm for the hard-fought 'best mud on PS3' gong.



SMACKDOWN VS RAW 2009

New career campaign, Create-a-finisher mode and four-player online tag teams... a return to form for the WWE uber-franchise.



GHOSTBUSTERS

Finished repeating the quotes and banging on about all the classic scenes from the original movie? Good. Now, let's see if the game is actually any fun to play.



PURE

Race quad bikes without fear of 'doing an Ozzy'. It's part Motorstorm and part SSX as you race off-road and pull tricks. We call this one the 'That's where I want to be buried'.



Preview

Classic Series **Format** PS3, PS2, PSP **ETA** November **Pub** THQ **Dev** Yuke's

Smackdown vs Raw 2009

Ⓐ Pals Ⓞ Punches ⊗ Piledrivers Ⓞ Pyromania

PS2

Quick pitch

Two's company

Improved tag team dynamics mean an end to the every-man-for-himself mentality.

Big finish

Create-A-Finisher lets hardcore fans recreate obscure moves... or design their own.

Burning love

In Inferno mode, your aim is to set your opponent's trunks ablaze.
Wait, what?



✓ Ladder matches now feature more moves, including a vicious neckbreaker from the top of the steps.



✓ You still can't break out of a taunt once it's started, so you need to time it a little bit better than this.

The last-second kickout. The accidentally concussed ref. The manager who slips a folding chair under the bottom rope, only to see their boy have it wrapped around his face instead. The best Smackdown matches are the ones that feel like a real pay-per-view main event, so the best Smackdown games – this is the tenth – are the ones that 'encourage' you to fight like the big boys do on TV.

That isn't an easy trick to pull off. In the 'real' thing, the wrestlers are co-operating, but in videogame Smackdown they're competing, so any loopholes in the system get ruthlessly exploited. Why land one chair-shot when you can fire off half a dozen? Why risk a tricky moonsault when the sharpshooter submission hold is virtually uncounterable? And why wait to 'accidentally' take the referee out when you can just suplex him into early retirement? Smackdown has tried a

few different approaches to stamping this sort of thing out over the years but the results have been mixed. Okay, they've been disastrous.

Silent partner

It's with massive enthusiasm, then, that we can report that our first tag match under SVR 2009 rules felt exactly like a tag match should. With a new emphasis on online play, four-man matches are the focus this year, and it shows. Key to the action is that the man on the apron has got just as much to do as the man in the ring. If a rival wrestler strays too close to the ropes, he can grab them to give his partner a free shot. If they're running towards the ropes, planning to bounce off, he can pull the highest rope down to send them sailing over the top, then hop down to give them a shoeing. He can pretend to get into the ring to distract the ref, or slap his partner ➤

Preview



PS4
054

▀ Ladder matches still take too long to win – the fun is in the vicious connections with the steel.

on the back to 'force' a tag if one man's hogging all the action. Conversely, if his boy's taking a beating, rhythmic presses on the D-pad will slap the turnbuckle and drive the crowd into a frenzy, pumping up the momentum for a 'hot tag' – if the injured wrestler can make it to the corner, he'll spring into action and [subject to God Of War-style quick-time button-taps] punch out both members of the rival team. Things still get chaotic – the ref's a bit too lenient about everyone piling into the ring at the same time, for instance – but that sort of thing shouldn't be too

difficult to sort out before the November release.

Fire fighter

Like Metal Gear Solid 4 and Street Fighter IV, this Smackdown's also big on what Japanese developers call 'fan service'. The most-requested match type among punters, according to THQ, was the Inferno, so that's what Yuke's has delivered – a one-on-one fight where the object is to shove your opponent into the gas-fuelled flames

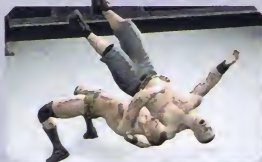
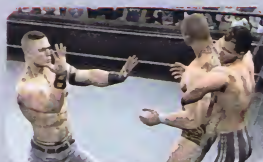


▀ Y2J's back with an improved intro film, more sensible haircut and spine-mangling Codebreaker finishing move.

surrounding the ring. Obviously that'd be too easy on its own – that real-life vs videogame conflict again – so first you've got to pump up the temperature with signature moves. When it hits 200 degrees, you simply drag your opponent to the ropes and a quick mini-game decides whether he burns.

The other big change – certain to be more exciting for diehard grappling fans – is the Create-A-Finisher option. The glacé cherry perched on top of Smackdown's already-exhaustive creation system lets you string

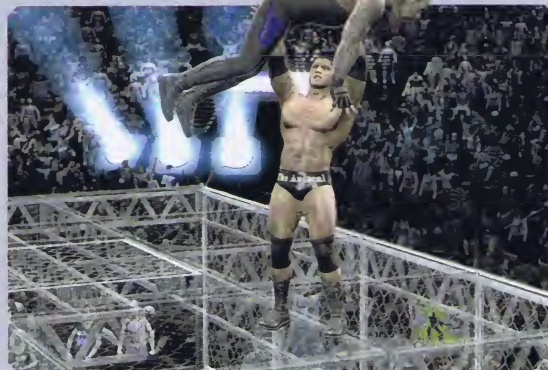
The characters Smackdown's heavy-hitting line-up



The roster is bulging with Raw and Smackdown favourites like occasional rapper and movie star, John Cena...



...plus Cena's sometime rival Randy Orton and, in the main image [above right] the mighty duo of The Undertaker and controversy-baiting behemoth, Batista.



Who the hell are The Hardy boys?

An agro-batic duo with mullets of iron

Character history

As you'd expect from a duo that made their debut in the Trampoline Wrestling Federation, real-life brothers Matt and Jeff Hardy are probably the most acrobatic tag team on the WWE roster. They've had their differences – the pair split up after an ill-advised Swanton Bomb by Jeff lost a cage match against the Dudleys; Jeff even briefly defected to rival promotion TNA – but now they're back.

Signature Moves

The Spin Cycle

Jeff does a forward roll over his opponent's abdomen while brother Matt drops a fist into their face.

Poetry In Motion

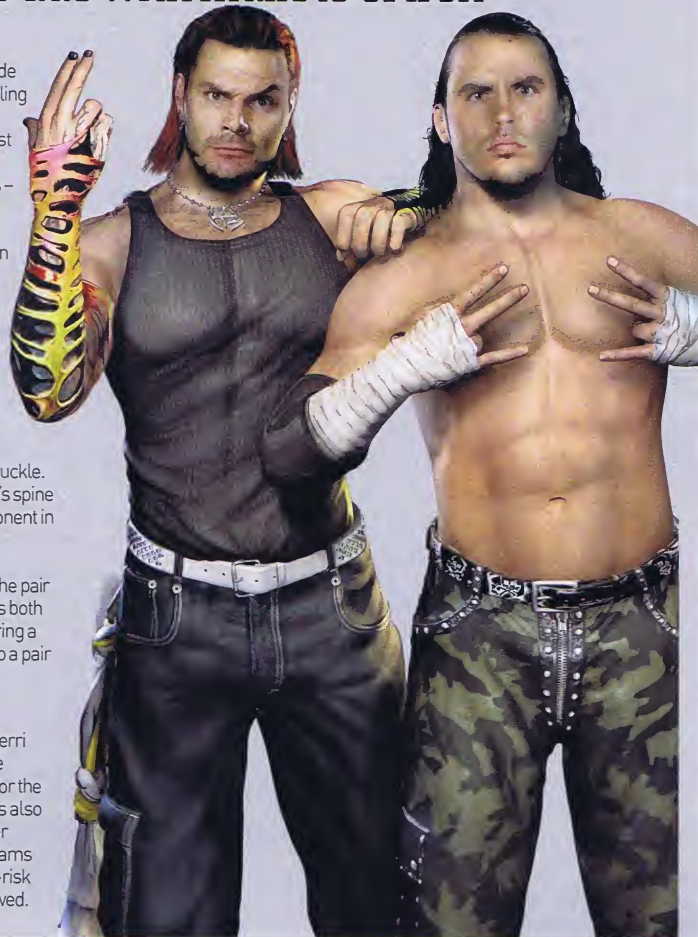
Opponent slumps against the turnbuckle. Matt kneels down. Jeff uses big bro's spine as a springboard and hoofs his opponent in the face. Always a crowd-pleaser.

The Omega Event

Named after the federation where the pair made their tag team debut, this sees both 'Boyz' doing leg drops – Matt delivering a calf to the throat while Jeff serves up a pair of size 12s to the groin.

One To Watch

The final bout in the best-of-seven Terri Invitational Tournament – where the Hardys battled Edge and Christian for the 'services' of diva Terri Runnels – was also the WWE's first ever tag team ladder match. The Hardys won, but both teams cemented their reputations as high-risk innovators. A standing ovation followed.



"Whirl them onto your shoulder, flex your biceps or smoke an imaginary cigarette."

together up to ten separate animations, from a list of hundreds, to craft a totally new finisher – or mimic one from a rival organisation. The options from one step follow logically from what's come before – so if your opponent's head is between your legs, you can hoist them up for a piledriver, whirl them onto your shoulders for a powerbomb, flex your biceps or smoke an imaginary cigarette.

Hit the road

Finally there's the new season mode, which THQ is calling the Road To Wrestlemania. Rather than offering a whole year's-worth of events, this strips off the fat and simply covers the three months between the Royal

Rumble – where the challenger for Mania is traditionally determined – and the biggest event in the wrestling calendar. According to Yuke's, this'll allow them to tailor storylines to individual wrestlers, rather than serve up generic content that seems out of character for, say, the Undertaker. However, with nothing definite on show yet there's no saying whether it'll offer more interactivity than previous season modes.

With few changes to the core gameplay system, Smackdown isn't going to be winning any recruits from the Virtua Fighter camp, but for people who can't see a referee without reaching for a steel chair, there's plenty to be excited about.

Dev talk



"Create-A-Finisher is the most exciting thing for myself about this year's WWE Smackdown vs Raw. When I was a boy, I dreamed about making fantastic powerful finishing moves, and now I can do it."

Taku Chihaya
Producer, Yuke's

Can't Wait To Play...



Industry insiders reveal their PS3 faves

Clint Hawking
Creative director, Far Cry 2

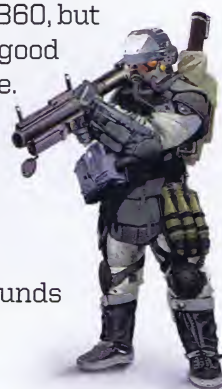
Fallout 3



"It sounds like they're doing some similar things to us. And obviously Oblivion's a masterpiece so if anyone can do justice to Fallout it's going to be those guys. Once I found out they were making it, I installed Fallout 2 and started playing it again."

Killzone 2

"Shooters seem to be the domain of the 360, but PS3 has some good ones in the pipe. It will be interesting to see what they can do with a PlayStation 3 exclusive. It sounds like it could be really cool."



Afrika



"I saw it before we announced Far Cry 2 and I was like, 'Oh my God, what's it going to be?' There are similarities to our game so it'll be interesting to see how different their environments are."



Preview

Quick pitch

One big joke

Comedy boxing game in the style of Ready 2 Rumble with over-the-top special moves.

Breaker, breaker

Build combos and you can unleash a finisher that *actually breaks your opponent's face*. When's Fight Night Round 4 out again?

Britney vs K-Fed

The character creation system lets you upload any photo. Yes, any.

Special Series Format PS3 ETA 5 September Pub EA Dev EA Canada

Facebreaker

△ Hook ○ Jab ⊗ Cross □ Litigation

Don't worry, it's not just you, we think the fat man looks ridiculous too. But the good news is that you won't be reliant on EA's 'hilarious' character design in Facebreaker – you can make your own. And not only is there a massive array of sliders and switches to bend, warp and twist faces into shape, you can also upload photos to map onto your fighter's face. According to producer Todd Batty, the development team have stuck everyone from the Lost cast to Britney Spears and Kevin

Federline in the ring to slug it out. Your bespoke boxer can also be shared online and Batty hopes there will be a wealth of user-created celebs to batter. (We've already scoured Google image search for the 'best' picture of Steve McClaren.) The actual fights are exercises in showboating. The aforementioned fatty, pictured above, is Steve – a Dungeons & Dragons fan who's developed his own fighting style from playing games and watching ninja movies. He'll be no match for our custom-made nude Viggo Mortensen.

Original Concept Format PS3 ETA 2009 Pub Capcom Dev Airtight Games

Dark Void

△ Shoot ○ Clamber ⊗ Freefall □ Skyjack

Hide behind rocks, shoot aliens, learn new laser guns, repeat. For the first five minutes, Dark Void is indistinguishable from any other third-person shooter. Then you – literally – hit a wall, and things get interesting, thanks to what developer Airtight call 'Vertical Cover Combat' and hero Will's handy hover pack. On the deck, his chunky device – which lets you hop or glide, but *not* fly – is useful for flanking enemies,

but when he reaches a vertical cliff face it really comes into its own, letting him leap between outcrops as the camera shifts to face directly up. When you reach the top of the cliff, you can leap off in the hope of skyjacking an enemy UFO before hitting the ground. We're not sure if Dark Void is as revolutionary as Airtight thinks, but it certainly has dizzying potential.



❑ Forget the straight-faced sportsmanship of EA's other brawler *Fight Night*, this is about beating people up for the lulz.

Key ingredients

Facebreaker



1 OTT jaw-smashing punches.



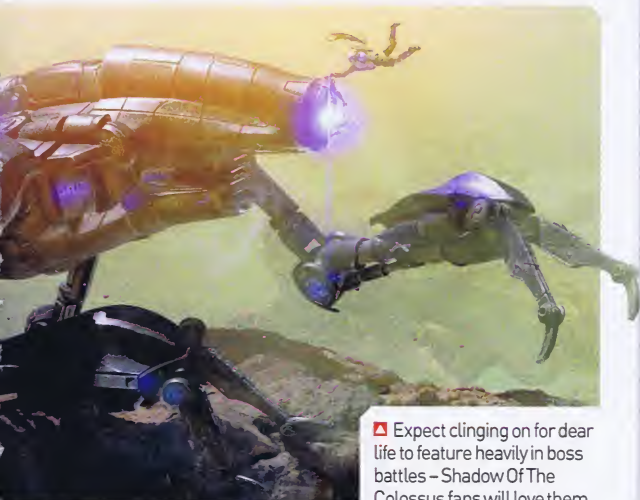
2 Fighting oversized oddballs from all around the world.



3 The girls get chinned too.



4 Costumes define characters.



❑ Expect clinging on for dear life to feature heavily in boss battles – *Shadow Of The Colossus* fans will love them.

❑ Let's play 'spot the good guy'. Clue: he's the one with the plank. Honest.



The Splat House Format PS3 ETA 2009 Pub Namco Bandai Dev Bottlerocket Entertainment

Splatterhouse

⬆ Gouge ⬇ Stab ✕ True □ Love

Any game that lets you rip off an enemy's arm, then beat him to death with it, has our attention. And pre-order. *Splatterhouse* is heavy on the gore, but the bloodshed is all tongue firmly nail-gunned into cheek. Yes skulls pop and blood coats the walls, but it's pantomime violence. (A pantomime directed by Takashi Miike.)

Rick rolled

The slaughter starts when monsters warp into the real world through mysterious portals and kidnap geeky student Rick's girlfriend, Jennifer. After conveniently finding a mysterious mask that turns him into a hulking monster, Rick grabs the nearest meat cleaver and sets off to save his chick.

As well as limbs he can also tear off heads to throw, swing enemies into walls and use weapons such as planks of wood, machetes and gut-busting shotguns. Any monsters he kills release 'necrotic energy' that can be used to reanimate the corpses into your own demonic army, either to attack enemies or solve puzzles. Rick can also trigger a berserker state where he gets larger, more powerful, and grows spikes that inflict extra damage. And he's going to need these skills, considering bosses include a giant burning Wickerman and 'Biggie Man' – an enormous maniac with chainsaws for hands who returns from Namco's 1980s arcade original. Jennifer? You had better be worth it.



▲ When Rick gets hurt, chunks are physically ripped from his body. As he heals, the missing bits grow back.



Preview



Class: **Format** PS3 **ETA** November **Pub** Midway **Dev** Midway

Mortal Kombat VS DC Universe

△ Batarangs ○ Harpoons ⊗ Heat □ Ice

Okay, so we're still a bit bummed about not being able to rip Superman's spine out – but! – you can give him a stern kicking. The latest word is that DC has consented to the Man Of Steel's iconic 'S' being ripped off, and a new damage system means he can get bloodied up. So why is he so vulnerable to a bunch of ninjas? Well, they all have magical abilities,



and magic comes after Kryptonite on Clark Kent's 'to avoid' list. Producer Ed Boon says that all will become clear in the story, which tackles the same events from the both the DC and Mortal Kombat perspectives.

Bruise control

The fights themselves are vicious. The multiple stances and weapon styles from recent MKs are gone, but characters now boast five or six special moves. Supes, for example, has heat-vision, ice-breath, super-breath (does he neck a pack of Mentos?), a ground-shaking floor punch and an

in-flight uppercut. Throws have been replaced by a paper-scissors-stone-style mini-game that sees one character unleash attacks while the other tries to block; a similar system sees fighters tussle for position in mid-air when they fall from buildings. It's even possible to drive foes through destructible scenery, with a button-hammering mini-game determining how much damage you inflict as you, say, put Batman through the offices of the Daily Planet. The downside? DC is unlikely to allow fatalities – even tame ones – and there's no word yet on the exact lineup of comic characters. Bagsy not be Aquaman, though.



▲ Flash mostly fights at normal speed, but notches up to mach two for his special moves.



❑ Kombat characters have been redesigned to fit the DC style and feature incredible detail. Scorpion here has never looked so sharp.

Quick pitch

Super friends

Superman, Batman and Flash are confirmed, but other DC heroes and villains will appear too.

Story time

DC fans rejoice – veteran comic scribe Jimmy Palmiotti is working on the script. Yes, a script.

Violence

A ban on head-removal doesn't mean it's all slapping and hair pulling – spurts of blood are still in.

Could Be A Contender

Recoil: Retrograd



This one sounds like it's going to be a winner

The premise

You play Davi Atman, a government 'cleaner' working in a steampunk city called Retrograd, ruled by psychic time travellers the Cardinals.

The reality

It's a third-person action adventure mixing time travel, combat and puzzles in a universe built on big clunky steam-powered technology.

The hook

Davi is sent into the past on various missions that change the future (his present).

The inspiration

The End Of Eternity by Isaac Asimov where time travellers prevent past disasters.

The chances

The time travelling ideas sound exciting and Morten Iversen, one of the writers on Hitman, is penning the script. Colour us intrigued.

Format PS3 ETA TBC Pub TBC Dev ZeitGuz



Source Amazon.co.uk

Pre-Orders The punters' top three



1 Star Wars The Force Unleashed

Join the dark side. Use your lightsaber and Force powers to make a nuisance of yourself as Vader's secret apprentice.

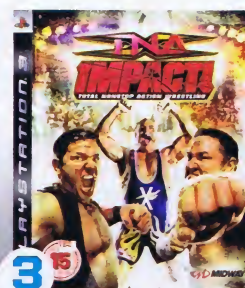
Format PS3 ETA 19 September
Pub LucasArts



2 Mercenaries 2 World In Flames

It's a sandbox with mines in, as you run, gun and hijack your way through a Venezuelan civil war, building your own PMC and raking in the blood money.

Format PS3 ETA Autumn Pub EA



3 TNA Impact!

The new, ultra aggressive kid on the wrestling block. Take fighters like Samoa Joe, Kurt Angle and AJ Styles into the six-sided ring for a pummeling.

Format PS3 ETA 19 September
Pub Midway



Preview



PS2
060

Can't wait?
Play these



Lego Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures
(PS2, PS3, LucasArts)
An action extravaganza packed with puzzles – based on the good films, not the weak new one.



Ghosthunter
(PS2, Sony)
Starring a Brad Pitt-a-like edgy cop turned, uh, paranormal cop, Sony's spook-blasting game was intriguing but never got a sequel.

By *Malcolm* Format PS3, PS2 ETA October 2008 Pub Sierra Games Dev Terminal Reality Studios

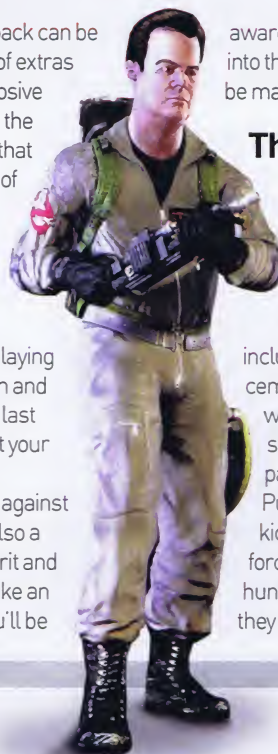
Ghostbusters

Ⓐ Dogs Ⓑ Cats ✕ Living ☐ Together

Forget the ghosts. The real stars here are the proton packs and the torrents of Technicolor destruction they unleash. Everything reacts to your attacks and smashing stuff up is definitely the best part of being a pro spook-botherer. Steer your beam over the environment and wood splinters, glass shatters, steel bends and toilet rolls ignite. A running total keeps tabs on the insurance cost of your wayward blasting. Fortunately, crossing the streams will no longer cause an apocalyptic explosion. Or as Egon Spengler puts it, "All life as you know it stopping instantaneously and every molecule in your body exploding at the speed of light."

Of course *Ghostbusters* is mainly about catching ghouls. The more you trap, the more cash you earn for

upgrades. Your proton pack can be kitted out with an array of extras from Boson Darts (explosive blasts channelled down the beam) to a stasis ability that can freeze ghosts. Best of all is the Tether Gun, which can tie ghosts to each other or to the scenery to slow them down. Your backpack also acts as a HUD, displaying health, weapon selection and pack temperature. That last bit's important: overheat your gear and it'll shut down, leaving you defenceless against slime attacks. There's also a Slam Meter. Lasso a spirit and after shaking it around like an ectoplasmic cocktail you'll be



awarded a 'Slam' to smash the ghost into the scenery, stunning it enough to be manoeuvred into a trap.

The big grapple

Set two years after the second movie, you're hired as the fifth member of the team just as New York sees a massive spike in paranormal activity. New earthly locations will include places like haunted cemeteries and familiar set-ups with a twist. For example, city streets packed with hundreds of panicking people fleeing the Stay Puft Marshmallow Man as he kicks Cadillacs and cabs at them, forcing you to blast the speeding hunks of metal out of the sky before they crush countless innocents.

Quick pitch

NY's Most Haunted

Capture ghosts in familiar and new locations and save New York from spook-ageddon.

They're back

Join the original Ghostbusters crew and prove yourself worthy of the coveted grey boiler suit.

Spooky story

Experience the next chapter in the series via a plot written by Dan Aykroyd and Harold Ramis.



Enter the Spirit World where new enemies and freaky puzzles await.

Each Ghostbuster is being voiced by the original actor.



Wait, is this the A Night At The Museum game?



Lasso ghosts and drag them into traps.

"If you loved the movies, there's plenty to trigger a rush of nostalgia."

You'll also find yourself battling various paranormal entities in the Spirit World.

If you loved the movies, there's plenty here to trigger a rush of nostalgia. Early missions include capturing gluttonous mucus ball, Slimer; in a plush banquet hall, chasing the dead librarian around the New York Public Library and battling Stay Puft. Why you're battling old ghosts

in the original locations from the first movie several years later has yet to be explained. Just as long as it's not some kind of VR training, though, as that'll be a point off the review score right there.

Star struck

Despite fresh material this is the real deal as far as authenticity goes. Stars Dan

Aykroyd, Harold Ramis and Bill Murray are back along with many of the original cast – Sigourney Weaver and Rick Moranis are noticeable absentees. And with Aykroyd and Ramis penning the script, plus Ghostbusters director Ivan Reitman directing cut-scenes, this is being pitched as the third Ghostbusters movie that never was.

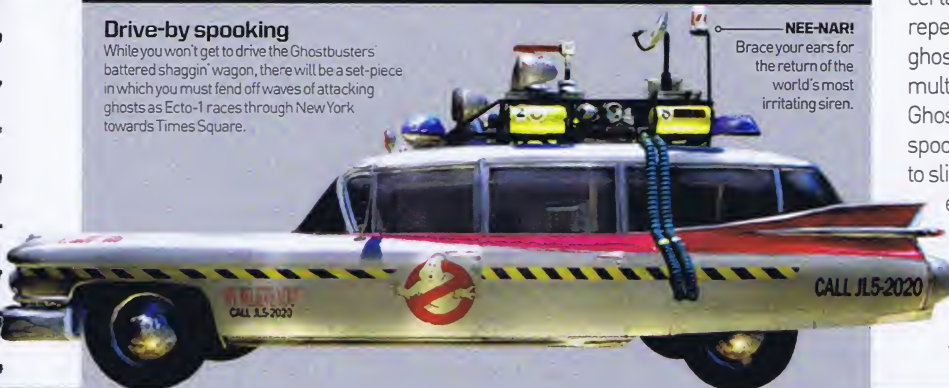
With enough carnage to make most action games feel inadequate and the movie's dry humour intact, Ghostbusters certainly has promise, despite a whiff of repetition to the 'destroy everything/trap ghosts' set-up. The Ghosts vs 'Busters multiplayer adds some variety – Ghostbusters get proton packs; the spooks can fly through walls as they try to slime opponents. What's really exciting, though, is the fact that the original cast and creative team has been reunited after almost two decades – and if they can't make a funny game, you've got to fear for anyone else trying to.

The car's the star Ecto-1

Drive-by spooking

While you won't get to drive the Ghostbusters' battered shaggin' wagon, there will be a set-piece in which you must fend off waves of attacking ghosts as Ecto-1 races through New York towards Times Square.

NEE-NAR!
Brace your ears for the return of the world's most irritating siren.



Dev talk



"We've tried to centre on the same themes as the films, such as fighting the establishment. We also try to explain why New York has become such a hotbed for paranormal activity."

Andy Dombroski
Lead level designer,
Terminal Reality



Preview



Wyoming, California, New Mexico, Thailand, and Italy all supply spectacular track settings.

Quick pitch

Race for the prize

Arcade buggy-racing with lush real-world environments and 16-player online support.

Look before you leap

'Vertigo Rush' moments let you perform multiple tricks while 400ft off the ground.

Build a bike

Create your dream quad from a catalogue of officially licensed parts.

Dark Horse Format PS3 ETA September Pub Disney Interactive Dev Black Rock Studios

Pure

△ Look ○ At × Me □ Mum

062

Imagine trying to splice the current off-road champ, *Motorstorm*, with the preposterous show-offery of the *SSX* snowboard series. What would you get, other than oil all over the carpet? Well, possibly *Pure*. This new racer seamlessly integrates big tricks, bigger crashes and beautiful environments. And here's the real surprise: it actually works, largely thanks to its super-tight handling.

Although split into three types of competition – main races, standard races, and freestyle events – the focus here is on tricks. Huge tricks. Each of the game's 12 courses is loaded with

jumps from which you can catapult your quad bike and send your driver into 'Tony Hawk wants to end it all' mode. With each successful trick a Burnout-style gauge fills, unlocking better moves until you eventually earn a special move. Alternatively, you can use the gauge as boost by pressing ⊙.

Strike a pose

Boosting through each course in the race modes might sound like a no-brainer, but there's a cunning twist: fill your meter and you get unlimited boost to go with your special move, until your next crash. Clever. Plus performing

the bigger tricks looks properly funny – our highlight so far is nailing Blind Faith, where your rider leans backwards over the handlebars and poses as if offering his hands in prayer while high above a stunning vista based on Italy's Lake Garda.

Black Rock insists 16-way online play is a priority and that, despite the fast racing and high level of detail on each course, lag won't be a problem on their dedicated servers. If the developer lives up to its word then *Pure* has a shot at challenging *Motorstorm: Pacific Rift* for the crown of most-deranged racer on PS3.

Dev talk



"The most exciting element of *Pure* is the *Vertigo Rush*. This is where all of *Pure*'s features come together."

Craig Gabell
Art director, Black Rock Studios

Let's off-road Why you'll want to get dirty with *Pure*



Pack racing meets brash exhibitionism as you hurtle around tracks, nailing tricks on every jump.



The left stick affects where your rider puts his weight. Rock it back then forwards as you jump and you'll have more air time in which to pull off spectacular, boost-earning moves.

LET THE GAMES BEGIN

INTERNATIONAL ATHLETICS



3+



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Preview



Dark Horse Format PS3 ETA 31 October Pub EA Dev EA Redwood Shores

More space

It's more than just a game...



EA is planning a few extras for Dead Space. There's a comic book series that tells the events leading up to the start of the game. It's written by the game's scriptwriter, Antony Johnston, and is illustrated by 30 Days Of Night sketcher, Ben Templesmith. You can see an animated version of issue one at snipurl.com/2etmu. There's also a CGI movie in the pipeline, due for release just before Halloween.

Dead Space

⬆ Aliens ⬆ Zombies ⬆ Vacuum ⬆ Nausea

Splot, splot, splot... That mushy sound is the worst thing we've encountered in Dead Space so far. And therefore also the best. It's being made by a man skinned from the neck down – muscles glistening with blood, intestines sagging under his ribcage – who's rhythmically butting a wall. When I take a step closer he collapses into a gory heap. Suddenly interstellar travel doesn't seem quite like the amazing chance to know the mind of God that was promised in the brochure.

The horrific scene takes place on a mining spaceship called the Ishimura which has been overrun by an alien race called the Necromorph. Its chief objective? Kill people and reanimate their corpses as spiny undead monsters. They've already torn through the ship and decimated the crew. The man you've got to feel sorry for, though, is Isaac Clarke, a hapless spanner jockey sent in to make essential repairs. Fix intergalactic fusion engines? Easy. Check oil? No problem. Destroy a ship full of

murderous ETs? "Yeah, it's double time and there's a call out charge..."

Shock and gore

As Isaac probes further into the Ishimura things only get worse. There are two 'survivors': a woman talking to an injured friend, reassuring him that someone will save them. Except the companion is scattered around the floor in bite-sized chunks – something she would have noticed if both her eyes hadn't been torn out. Then there's the nurse in sick bay, giggling coquettishly

5 good reasons Why Dead Space will scare you stupid

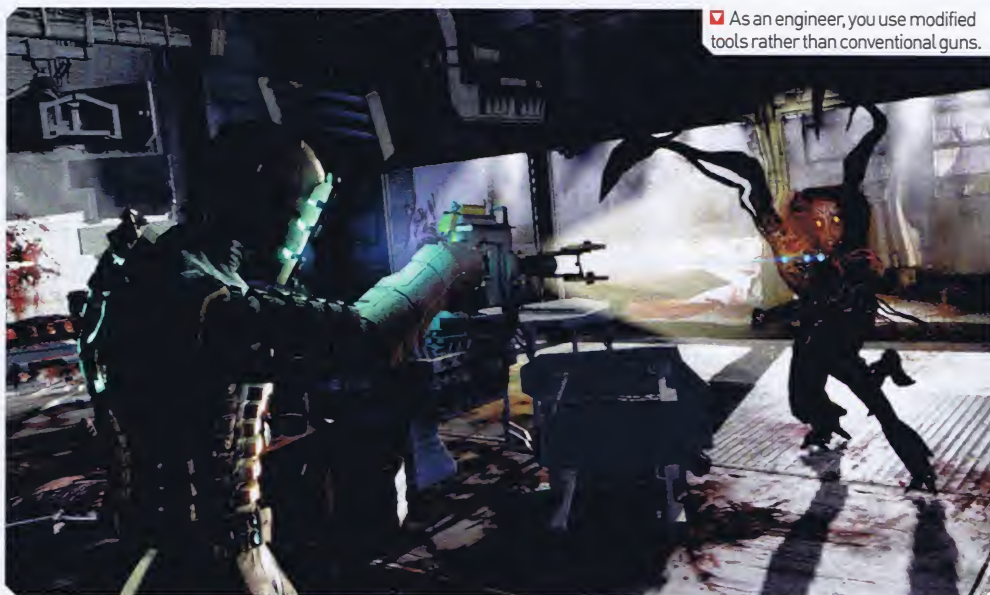
1 Necromorph
These aliens use dead people as hosts, creating creatures from human remains including dead babies scavenged from cloned embryos.

2 No distractions
Info is relayed by holographic displays: your inventory is projected from your spacesuit and a laser draws lines on the floor to guide you.

3 Zero G
Areas without gravity are filled with floating bodies, drifting globs of blood and enable aliens to glide sinisterly through space to reach you.

4 Time control
You can slow time using a stasis field. Handy to slip through moving rotors or when fighting aliens, but you'll only be delaying the inevitable.

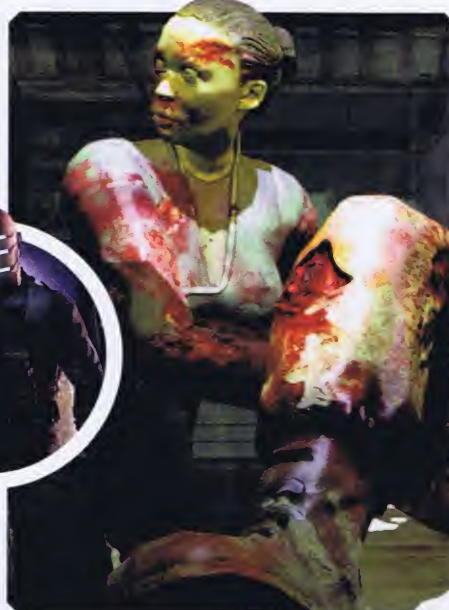
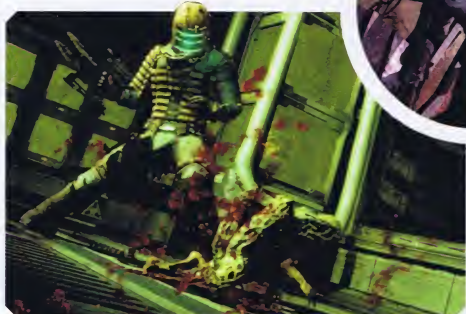
5 Space
Parts of the ship are ripped open to reveal beautiful but terrifying space. Your oxygen is limited though – so there's no time to admire the bleak view.



As an engineer, you use modified tools rather than conventional guns.



"Look, I'm sorry, don't leave. I can change!"



Not all the victims are dead. When you meet this crazy nurse lady she's up to her elbows in guts. And utterly mad.

"Needless to say there's probably an '18'-rating already in the post."

as she plunges her hands repeatedly into a corpse on the examination table. Needless to say there's probably an '18'-rating already in the post.

These morbidly atmospheric discoveries add oppressive dread to the otherwise bombastic action. Monsters burst from vents, sirens blare suddenly and lights go out as you reach objectives, signalling imminent attack. It's panicky, trigger-twitching stuff but there's little transition between creepy blood-soaked corridors and full-scale attack – it's all or nothing. One interesting idea is

Isaac's ability to dismember aliens. Arms, legs, tentacles and heads can all be lopped off with a careful aim. It adds an interesting layer of strategy: do you kneecap a Necromorph to slow it down or blast off its limbs so there are less pointy bits to worry about?

The only concern at the moment is that objectives seem to consist solely of 'go to A, get B and use it on C'. So far every mission played has used the same structure. Even with the gruesome atmosphere, such a repetitive setup will soon get old if it's all that's hiding in the dark.

Dev talk



"We have a pregnant enemy. You must shoot the legs because if you shoot the belly, little swarm things come out."
Derek Chan
Global product manager, EA

Gut Reaction

What's strong and what's wrong

▲ MGS4's cut-scenes

Yeah, okay, they're a bit talky – but would the action be half as exciting without the emotional depth built up in-between?

▲ Horror show

Siren confirms our suspicion that day trips to 'the woods' invariably end in brutal murder.

▲ Sony's Little star

PS3's most important first-party exclusive continues to impress. Our new There Will Be Blood level is a thing of milkshake-slurping magic.



065

▼ APB on PS3

Realtime Worlds' new crime game, All Points Bulletin, looks like a massively multiplayer version of GTA. Let's hope there's no truth in rumours it might end up an Xbox 360 exclusive.



▼ Daft Lord

Vader has no business being in Soulcalibur IV, and whoever put him in there seems to have severely misunderstood how lightsabers are supposed to work.

▼ Pacific frights

Bad enough that Call Of Duty: World At War is dragging us back to WW2, but is it just us or does the whole thing look a bit, y'know, diplomatically inflammatory?



Preview

The Latest On...

New shots, new games, new info



Shikitei

Format PS3 ETA Out now Pub Sony

Sony's new Japan-only gardening sim lets you fill a plot with plants and watch them grow. You can speed up time to watch seasons pass, quietly explore your handiwork or download animals to scurry between the privet. Serene!



Beyond Good & Evil 2

Format PS3 ETA TBC Pub Ubisoft

The original sold like death-flavoured crisps despite being brilliant. The weird teaser for the sequel only revealed the porcine Uncle Pey'j – but if that's the in-game engine, as Ubi claim, then he's easily the prettiest pig on PS3.



UFC 2009 Undisputed

Format PS3 ETA Autumn Pub THQ

Yuke's, the Smackdown dev, is bringing mixed martial arts to PS3. We're told to expect realistic counters and context-based controls. Translated: two seconds of brutal 'stand-up' followed by a lot of rolling about trying to choke each other.



Spider-Man: Web Of Shadows

Format PS3 ETA Oct Pub Activision

RPG-style character development, the ability to switch red/blue or black suits at will and the chance to go off the rails Hancock-style? Maybe *do* want.



Bionic Commando

Format PS3 ETA Oct Pub Capcom

We're still not sold on the dreadlocked hero, Nathan – another killing machine who, it transpires, can't swim. Still, swinging around in multiplayer using the bionic arm sounds fun.



Alpha Protocol

Format PS3 ETA 2009 Pub Sega

Word on the street is that Obsidian Entertainment is going back to the drawing board with Protocol's spy hero, after the deafening chorus of 'meh' that greeted his blandly chiselled jaw.

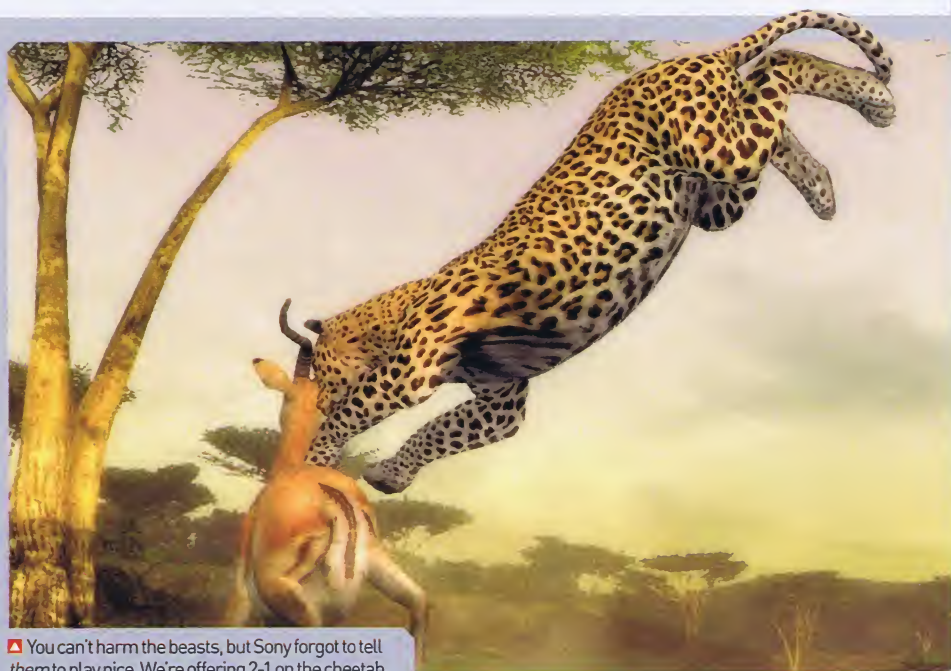
There's more...

EA has cancelled RTS **Command & Conquer: Red Alert 3** to focus on 360 development. Producer Jim Vessella recently says they'll give PS3, "the attention it deserves pretty soon." Thanks! Meanwhile, EA Games president Frank Gibeau has also confirmed a new **Need For Speed Underground** is in development and will return to the series' true street racing roots after Pro Street's disappointing sales. It looks increasingly likely that Neversoft is handing over **Tony Hawk** dev duties to new team Robomodo. One of the rumoured ideas meant to challenge Skate's analogue controls is a custom USB skateboard controller. Really sad smiley face. A recent leak by a disgruntled ex-LucasArts employee has confirmed that the next gen **Indian Jones** title is still in development, as is the next **Star Wars Battlefront** game. PC uber-devs Crytek has been advertising for PSP developers – Crysis PSP anyone? Another PSP title, **LocoRoco 2**, has also been confirmed by Sony Europe UK's product manager Claire Backhouse. Finally, Reflections is working on a new **Driver** game for Ubisoft. Don't expect it to tip up before the end of 2009.

Afrika

Format PS3 ETA 28 Aug Pub Sony

Explore the African savannah by foot, jeep or hot air balloon, snapping the wildlife for cash as you collect info and photos for an encyclopaedic Animal Library. Sixaxis judges how steady you're holding the camera – shaky hands mean blurry shots which earn less shiny dollars to spend on better photographic gear. Sadly, it's only coming out in Japan – but we'll bring you a full review next issue. Until then, what's Japanese for 'please suck the venom from the bite'?



▲ You can't harm the beasts, but Sony forgot to tell them to play nice. We're offering 2-1 on the cheetah.

lastnext...

Back issues

There's no need to miss out



Issue #018 May 2008

Exclusive GTA IV review,
Mirror's Edge hands-on,
PSP GPS tested, Alpha
Protocol first look
and Timesplitters 4
revealed at last.



Issue #019 June 2008

Exclusive MGS4 and
Race Driver GRID reviews,
new Resident Evil 5 shots,
Prince Of Persia first look
and Little Big Planet
latest details.



Issue #020 July 2008

World exclusive 007:
Quantum Of Solace first
look, all-new Tomb Raider:
Underworld shots, the
secrets of GTA IV... And
meet the real Niko.

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Definitive verdict
on Soulcalibur IV
Pro Evo 2009 facts
Meet Bioshock's
freakiest fans
Return of the
OPM E3 Awards

There will be blood

Hands-on with Resident Evil 5

PlayStation Official Magazine UK

A detailed action figure of Kratos from the God of War series, shown in a dynamic, lunging pose. He has his signature white and red striped armor, a white mask with a red vertical stripe down the center, and a black goatee. His face is marked with red scratches. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with green foliage.

OPM
interview

PS
068

Good

is in the details

We spoke to God Of War director David Jaffe about working on PSN, how PS3 is doing in the exclusives war, and his still officially unannounced Twisted Metal sequel

After God Of War you released Calling All Cars. For our money it's the best thing on the PSN store. What did you learn while making it, and will you do more titles of that size?

We certainly didn't hit the level of success we wanted to with that game, so now we've scaled up considerably. While there are fans out there, they certainly don't exist in the numbers we're used to or that we need to hit in order to make business sense. [At Jaffe's

new company Eat Sleep Play] we're now dealing with a team of very well paid, very experienced 25-35 people and we have to adjust our design accordingly. So I think one of the lessons is always design your game for the team you've got, whether that means you've got a big team or a small team or a team that's passionate about a certain kind of game. I need to be malleable and versatile enough to adjust to who's making the game, otherwise I just have – what I

consider to be – really amazing designs but they're just basically on paper.

Are there any other PSN games that you think work particularly well?

I'm not an 'arty' gamer. I appreciate that sort of stuff from a distance, I appreciate Flow, I appreciate Everyday Shooter, [but] those aren't really my sorts of games. I'm more of a bread and butter gameplayer, I just wanna jump in and have a good time. For me, on ►

interview

David Jaffe

Xbox Live Arcade or PSN I haven't found a game that's made me go 'Oh my God, that totally delivers the type of experience I'm looking for, for \$9.99'. We tried with *Calling All Cars*, [but] even that game could have used another six months in development. We polished it really well, I thought it had a fun art style. It needed some more content, but more importantly it needed more design time in the oven – we needed more depth to the tactical and strategic aspects, we needed more depth in the ways you can counter attack and we needed to make it clear to the player that you *could* counter attack. So much of that either wasn't there or wasn't highlighted so it just comes off as a relatively shallow experience – one that people like and I'm proud of, but it's very one-note.

Do you think part of the problem is that the audience isn't here for PSN yet?

Well I think those things are flaws in the design – they're purely my fault. If *Calling All Cars* had come out and I'd said, you know what, we did an awesome game but the audience hasn't caught up, I'd have said 'that's okay, maybe they'll catch up as the install base grows; maybe we'll make a sequel or an expansion pack and build it'. But the reality is, I look at that game and I have regrets as a designer because I wasn't doing my best work, so regardless of the size of the install base there's a lack of quality there when it comes to how good the design is.

What does represent your best work?

What's the game you're most proud of? Oh, man. You know what, it's probably every game you're working on now, or every game you worked on last. You know we just shipped an expansion pack, in essence, to the *Twisted Metal* series here in America. The *Twisted Metal* series has *never* done well in the UK, it's always a disaster commercially in Europe.

Why do you think that is?

Well, I think there's two things. If we had a chance to make a new one we would definitely be reassessing both gameplay and thematic, but the thematic until this point has been very American-centric. It's very loud, very obnoxious and tied in to a lot of American culture – big, beefy taxi cabs and ice cream trucks. There's very little elegance to the series. I think the gameplay is deep, but only once you invest enough time to get really into it, which is totally a design mistake. We knew the gameplay was in there, but for most people it comes across as a loud, obnoxious deathmatch game that's very shallow. I think those are the reasons that the success of that series is limited to America – where we've done eight, nine million copies. If we were to go forward with it we'd be trying to address

those issues and say, okay, we know there's something very appealing about this concept on a gut DNA level, but we just need to figure out how to expose and excite the rest of the world, or at least the European community, to what we think is a really cool idea.

You worked for Sony for many years. When you set up Eat Sleep Play was there ever a chance you'd sign with any other publisher?

Not really. We did speak with a couple of other publishers, but the reality of it is that it's the individuals that make up a company that matter – these people are family to us. They're the people we've worked with for 14 years, and we've had great success and great relationships. And sure, we look at other publishers and there are things they do worse and things they do better than Sony, or you look at different platforms and they have their pros and cons. But for us, I've always been a fan of the vision of Sony, and their vision of next gen. It doesn't mean I don't like Xbox or Wii, but I'm not only happy but proud and honoured that Sony wants to keep on

– do I look at some of those titles and say 'I think they could have been sharpened to appeal to a wider base, while still bringing that same amazing quality of gameplay you get from those developers'? Absolutely. I look at *Uncharted* and I know what Amy [Hennig] and the Naughty Dog guys were going for, and as an Indiana Jones freak I love it. But if I was sitting at the head of the table saying 'yes, no, yes, no,' I'd say 'You know what, I appreciate this vibe you got going, it's awesome, but it just doesn't speak to a large enough segment of the people who are willing to spend \$60 on a game'. I would have gone back to the drawing board and said, 'Can we get this high adventure cliffhanger vibe, but do it in a way which speaks to a wider audience?'

You've said you want to make games that are the equivalent of Michael Bay movies – big, exciting, accessible. Is this a lesson you learnt from your game, *Heartlands*, which tried to be political but never made it to release? *Heartlands* was trying to be both. On the design document, we had two requirements.

"The nature of giving you control is that you just start f***ing around."

working with us, we're also huge Sony fanboys and we're happy to work with them.

Do you think platform exclusives are still important?

I think they're crazy important, now more than ever. I always get a lot of s*** because I'm a proponent of a single format – a DVD-like standard format across the industry. But as we don't have that, and since it doesn't look like that's coming any time soon, the only thing that really makes a difference are your price-points and your exclusives.

How do you think Sony is doing, versus Microsoft and the 360?

I think Sony could be doing better, but I think they're doing pretty well. I was at the Sony store yesterday here in San Diego and I was looking at the wall of PS3 games. There was a sense of pride to see *Uncharted* up there, and *Ratchet* and *Heavenly Sword*. I like that those are exclusive. But could Sony be doing better? Always. And I hope *Eat Sleep Play* will contribute to that stable of exclusive games. It's hard to say this because you don't want to come off sounding like a marketing guy – and I'm not a marketing guy, but I do like success

One was to make a game which was emotional and political, but the other was to make a game that on the surface was a great war movie; a playable war story that just happened to be set in America. And to that end it would've been like Michael Bay directing *Red Dawn*. We had huge set-pieces, big moments and really fun weapons, and all of that was as important to us as speaking to my personal cynicism and disgust over the Bush administration.

Is emotion something you have to downplay if you want to make big commercial games?

Emotion? No. Politics, quite probably. *ET* has emotion, *Return Of The King* has emotion. The biggest movies of all time are not just up there without any heart or resonance. I do think when you get onto sort of left-wing, preachy politics – that's who I am, I'm a totally left-wing guy – then yeah, I think there probably could have been a group of people who said, 'This game's not for me because it speaks to a philosophy I don't agree with.' I was cool with that – I was willing to take that chance, and I also assumed that we'd be subtle enough that people who didn't want to

delve into that stuff would still get a great action game out of it.

But you have to ask how much the people playing these games are engaging with emotional material and how much they just like shooting stuff. Well I think that's the vast majority. That's a big limitation of the medium as we know it so far. One day I want to have enough money to open up a little quirky games studio with ten people and try a bunch of experimental stuff – it's a great dream to have. But in terms of making games for money, it seems the medium right now is limited in terms of being able to communicate emotion, beyond that of adrenaline, competition and camaraderie. I've embraced that, you know – this is what games are, this is what they've been since Parcheesi in India 4,000 years ago. So what I'm going to do is focus on what I know games are great at – making really fun experiences, entertaining people and making them feel like they've got great value for money. To me that's just as noble. Maybe a genius like [Sims designer] Will Wright will lead the way for us all and say, 'These things not only entertain, they can do more than that.' But what I get tired of hearing about is people going on the soapbox about how this is the next great medium, and how these are artistic, blah blah blah. Show me something – stop telling me about it, and show me something.

What about Call Of Duty 4?

It's probably one of the best executed games I've ever seen [but] I don't think people play COD4 and have a kick in the gut emotional reaction that's anywhere close to the equivalent of watching a crappy B movie, let alone a great feature film. The thing where they drag you out of the car and execute you at the beginning? Affected me not at all. When I played that, it was more appreciative, like 'Oh cool, I drove past those guys and they got shot, like in a movie'. But for me there's always this separation from it, it doesn't drag me into the actual story. I'm sitting in the car going 'Can I look 180°? Oh look, they locked my view at 90°'. I'm playing with things – can I break something? The nature of giving you control – and you not having any real consequence behind that control; you're not going to get hurt in real life – is you just start f***ing around with stuff. What supersedes the narrative to me is the very nature of what it is to play a game, which is control.

What do you think about GTA then, which tries to offer you as much freedom as possible? Do you think that's pushing the boundaries?

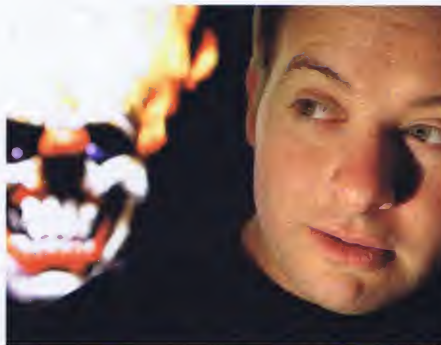
I think they're pushing the boundaries in many, many ways. What you hear a lot of



Who is...

David Jaffe

He began as a tester for Sony Imagesoft, and his first designer credit came on their 1994 SNES/Mega Drive title Mickey Mania. He worked at Sony for 13 years, designing the car combat series Twisted Metal and creating the phenomenally successful God Of War in 2005. As creative director of Sony's Santa Monica Studios, Jaffe had an advisory role on God Of War II and its PSP spin-off Chains Of Olympus, but left in 2007 to form Eat Sleep Play with Warhawk developer Incognito. After Calling All Cars, they're now working on a PS3 follow-up to Twisted Metal.



people say with GTA is, 'Now the player gets to tell the story,' and that's cool. But I've always looked at GTA kind of the way I look at Bioshock, which is that I appreciate it but after about an hour or two I'm like, 'Okay I get it, I've had my fun'. I don't like the missions in GTA, I don't like having fetch quests all over the place, and 'go get this' and 'bring it here'. It's just not my cup of tea.

We have to talk about God Of War. Have you played Chains Of Olympus on PSP?

I did, it was one of the few games that I finished. I thought it was really, really good.

Talking about emotion in games, what did you think of that moment when Kratos pushes his daughter away?

That's hard for two reasons. One is because I was involved in the very beginning with the story for that game, so that was something we talked about – not necessarily that moment, but the turmoil of, 'If I become this monster again I can fulfil my quest and save my kid,' but to become this monster, putting it into the hands of the player, you have to go kill these innocents, and ultimately push your daughter away. This conflict was something we discussed from the start. I think the execution of that was poor. I know what Ru [Weerasuriya, the game's director] was going for, but for me I don't think they had built the relationship up enough to care, and I thought the animation was really poorly done – it almost looked like he was taking some static-cling sheet that he'd got in the dryer and removing it from his clothes. It didn't feel like, you know, when you imagine Sophie's Choice, pulling the daughter out of his arms, there was none of that execution of emotion to make it as powerful as it could've been. But I don't think they're barking up the wrong tree. I think games like God Of War... obviously I'm biased [but] that was as close a formula as I was capable of coming up with for a game of communicating narrative in gameplay. The gameplay is central but every now and then we throw in these still-playable but clearly canned moments which hopefully will cause a player to have a cool story or emotional moment.

Do you think that being so close to the series makes you more critical of the subsequent games?

I'm rooting for those guys. I'm so thrilled and proud of the successes, and all the games that have come out so far – including the mobile phone game – I've had a hand in one way or the other. This next one coming out will be the first one that, with the exception of a few phone calls here and there, I've had nothing to do with. But even then, I'm totally rooting for these guys.

In the mood for... Dogs

Because in virtual worlds of guns, death and rap, man needs a friend

No matter what lonely old people or small children tell you, dogs are mostly rubbish. Costly to run, terrible conversationalists and totally screwed whenever they have to climb ladders, as best friends go they're pretty weak... in real life. But in games, the rules go out the window and all kinds of awesomeness becomes possible. Of course, they're not always strictly friendly – for every cheerful rapping dog there's at least two mangy radioactive killers – but we'll happily take those odds over the forever hungry flea-hostels dumped on us by reality.



Alsatian (Call Of Duty 4)

Not just Alsations, but attack hounds of the Russian Ultrationalists: razor-toothed killers with a rudimentary grasp on the evils of free market economics. Probably. Revolutionary zeal would explain why, despite the fact we completed the game on veteran, we still can't press R3 at the right time to stop them tearing open our fat Imperialist throats.



Parappa The Rapper

The 2D dog with baggy trousers and a beanie hat is totally adorable. But you don't *really* know him unless you've woken up in the dark hours wanting to strangle the life out of his wide eyes because your mind has become an endless disco of catchy tunes, gibberish lyrics (Toss the lettuce! Don't forget the cheese!) and split-second frustration.

Hewie (Haunting Ground)

Adventuring snow-white German Shepherd who escaped Haunting Ground's sinister castle alongside co-star Fiona and – internet rumours suggest – made a bear-trap cameo in fellow Capcom title Resi 4. A rugged outdoorsy sort of hound then, but one that would still look a-maz-ing in a teeny hat and booties. Who's a good boy!

The dog ending (Silent Hill 2)

James Sunderland emerges from the depths of Silent Hill a broken man, only to find that behind all the torture and death was... a smiling dog pulling levers at an old fashioned computer terminal, Wizard Of Oz-style. 'So it was all your work?' he gasps, collapsing in tears, before the mutt licks him on the face and sings the weirdest outro we've ever heard.



intermission

A tasty PlayStation snack



Amaterasu (Okami)

She's not so much a dog as a wolf. But that's okay, because it also turns out she's less of a wolf than she is goddess of the sun, travelling through ancient Japan restoring life to a ravaged land with her celestial brush/tail. Think painting the world happy is weird, wait until you meet the other gods, such as Kasugami, the magical drunken sheep.

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Cerberus (Resident Evil)

A rite of passage for any true Man Of PlayStation is nearly combusting with fright after this skinless sod of a dog jumps through the window in the first Resi. He's a Cerberus – a Doberman deliberately infected with the T-Virus by the Umbrella Corporation (unlike plain old zombie dogs, which are infected randomly) and he owes us a new pair of Calvins.

Now have your say

Did we miss any in-game canines? Email us at opm@futurenet.co.uk and let us know. In the meantime, here are a few virtual Rovers that missed the cut:

■ **Rule Of Rose** - Left out because the set-up's basically the same as Haunting Ground, except this time the dog, Brown, is a bit browner.

■ **The Sims Pets** - Make a freakish mutation of any dog you like with the twisted custom pet making machine.

■ **Katamari Damacy** - No star dogs here, but you do roll the little fellas up into your big ball of tat.

Jake (Dog's Life)

Jake's a happy-go-lucky beagle whose world is shattered when his girlfriend Daisy is 'dog-napped' by two men in a van. He tracks them across the American Mid-West, using his unique first-person 'smell-o-vision' to picture scents as colours. It sounds impressive but isn't as much fun as making him poo. Which you can do practically anywhere.



M3 Revolver Introduced in Killzone Liberation and due to appear in Killzone 2. Medium range, high stopping power, retro-chic blasting.

The New Standard

Story

Freedom

Action

War

Horror

Sci-Fi



Bang! The first-person shooter genre is now the most dominant in gaming. Over the next 15 pages we reveal the PS3 games that are aiming to bring something new to the party...

shooters ▶

feature

Killzone 2

Tank commander Jump into a vehicle and you get full control over movement and weapons. Tanks have a primary missile launcher, plus secondary machine gun. Just keep rolling and firing...



U76

Killzone



Pub Sony Dev Guerrilla ETA February 2009


**EXCLUSIVE
SHOTS**
PlayStation.
Official Magazine UK

Ol' red eyes The Helghast design maintains the Nazi stormtrooper look. The air processing gas mask stays, too – even on their homeworld.

Arena of death This wasteland face-off is the gritty climax to a beachhead assault. The Helghast come in from the far end with cover provided by rocket launchers. And tanks.

The Omaha landing from Saving Private Ryan is the movie scene that's been most referenced (or: ripped off) by games. But you've never seen it done like this; transposed to a dystopian alien planet. Soldiers scream, explosions puncture the sky and all around you comrades are cut down by fizzing tracer fire. Somewhere on the left, the heat haze of a grenade blast warps the screen. Ahead, a wrecked industrial complex is lit only by the muzzle flashes from dozens of Helghast guns, like camera flashes in the darkened football stadium of hell.

War machine

Killzone 2's smorgasbord of slaughter sets a new level for FPS visuals. A mass of explosions, physical interactions (bullet-riddled walls implode, gas canisters spin) and lavish post-processing effects. "We adjust the look and feel of any scene as it happens," explains senior producer, Steven Ter Heide. "Anything from desaturating the colours, to changing the colourisation, contrast or blurring, we can do on the fly and provide the player with feedback or set the mood for the action. Killzone has always had a very deliberate and specific look, and these effects help us bring together all [the] on-screen elements... To create an intense experience you always want a lot of things going on."

Killzone 2 is Vietnam in space. While the original had you repelling a Helghast invasion, this time you're heading out to *their* homeworld – a formidable alien landscape that makes Basra look like the Cote D'Azur. The Helghast know every

We head to Helghan for an explosive playtest

one 2


feature

Killzone 2



Defining weapon

The Helghast rifle is a stripped down, crudely constructed machine gun with a rickety firing noise that sounds like a tin can full of bolts being shaken in a tunnel. All the Helghast technology is cheaply fabricated, but reliably brutal.


Field dressing During combat it's possible to revive fallen comrades by approaching them and hitting  before they 'go into the light'.



Spray and pray There's currently no aiming assist in Killzone 2. As a result targeting enemies needs a steady hand, even when using the iron sights to look down the barrel.



nook and cranny, and have learned to utilise their harsh environment – for example, harnessing the huge electrical storms into nightmarish anti-aircraft weapons. You are several fathoms out of your depth.

Within this hectic setting, Guerrilla wants to mix up as many different styles of combat as possible. An early mission begins with an epic scramble to establish a beachhead outside a major Helghan city. You then dash through a labyrinth of abandoned industrial buildings in an attempt to seek out a safe route through the canal system for the bulk of the invasion force. During this interim stretch it's all close-quarters skirmishes in darkened silos and warehouses, Helghast troopers lurking behind huge metal containers and in the control rooms of arcane mega-machinery. They must be picked off with a judicious combination of the game's sneak 'n' peak system (which lets you quickly fire from a covering position), and a precision aim accessed by clicking R3. The snap-to-cover system is well implemented – you press  when near an object to go into a covering position and keep it pressed until you want to break out again. It's a lot more intuitive than having a different button



078



Body shot Each enemy has a variety of hit points around the body while physics and animation are blended to create spectacular deaths. Take out a leg, for example, and your target will drop to the ground before crawling for cover. Hit a shoulder and they'll twist before hitting the deck.

to break cover and means you never get stuck behind a wall while being flanked by gun-toting space fascists.

As your attack force assembles at the edge of the target city, things open out again. The mission finishes with a panoramic battle in which Helghast troopers fire rockets from ruined buildings into a central arena of death. You're able to jump inside a tank, using a secondary machine gun to hose enemy troops, while incinerating incoming vehicles with missiles.

Around you, soldiers surge and flee as billowing, multicolour explosions engulf great chunks of scenery. As with the best moments from Call Of Duty, there's a palpable sense of panic, of being a small, vulnerable cog in a grinding war machine. Later levels will take place in Helghast housing estates, obliterated by the planet's harsh ecology, and eventually the opulent palace of the Helghan leader, Emperor Visari himself.

Enemy intelligence

Amid all this intensity and scale the AI balance looks just right. Helghast troops are clever enough to find cover and communicate your whereabouts to their fellow soldiers – they'll even spot when you're standing next to

something hideously explosive and point it out to their mates.

However, they can still be flanked quite easily, allowing you to sneak up beside them and take out several with a burst of merciless full-auto. This seems to be where shooter AI is going – a mixture of cunning and vulnerability, honed to ensure a decent but not insurmountable challenge. Their AI behaviours can also backfire in unpredictable ways. Ter Heide tells us about one testing session at Guerrilla HQ where someone shot a Helghast guard in the legs – as the ▶



feature

Killzone 2



Pistol-packing As usual you get an emergency handgun for those low ammo moments. The Helghan M3 is a beast of a revolver that would dislocate Dirty Harry's shoulder – if he could squeeze the trigger.



Taxi! The ISA dropships take you in and out of the mission zones. Soldiers ride on top, creating the feel of a Normandy landing craft.

“Killzone is about the basics of shooting. It's about pulling the trigger and enjoying the results.”

shocked and enraged soldier went down he unleashed a hail of bullets, taking out three of his comrades.

The aim game

The designers have also toyed with other ideas to broaden the FPS gameplay. There will, for instance, be plenty of Sixaxis implementation. In one section you must twist a valve wheel to open a floodgate – you do this by rotating the controller, while holding down **L1** and **R1** to grip it. This received mixed responses from journalists at Sony's PlayStation Day in May, with some fearing lots of novelty mini-games tortuously squeezed into the mission structure. Ter Heide is quick to allay fears: “We've really tried to implement it

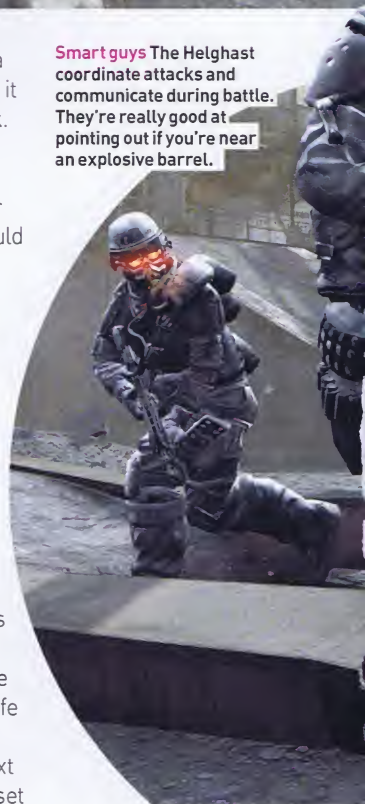
into the gameplay, to make sure it feels right while still keeping true to the FPS feel. Sixaxis is very tactile and being able to grab hold of a valve and twist it shut is very natural and instinctive. I think developers have to explore it further because you can find so many implementations. You just have to think creatively.”

Guerrilla also wants to build the sense of team spirit with its ‘buddy assist’ feature. For example, there's a section where you have to climb onto a high ledge to progress. Garza, your partner throughout the level, cups his hands and offers to boost you up – you're told to hit **○**, then you clamber over with his help. It'll be interesting to see how Guerrilla employs buddy assists throughout

the game. If the feature is *always* a mandatory means of progressing, it could feel like a pointless gimmick. However, put it in places where the player has a choice over how to progress, or hide it as a perk for conscientious explorers, and it could add a sense of freedom.

Mostly, Garza is a peripheral presence, running ahead to open doors, providing covering fire, which isn't all that revolutionary. Whether or not he'll play a bigger part later on Guerrilla isn't saying. However, providing deeper interaction between human and AI characters is hot on the developer agenda right now – multiplayer co-op modes are hugely popular and developers are keen to replicate the sense of playing with believable, real people rather than brainless bots. Half-Life 2 Episode 2 was a groundbreaker here with Alyx Vance, while the next Prince Of Persia title promises to set

Smart guys The Helghast coordinate attacks and communicate during battle. They're really good at pointing out if you're near an explosive barrel.





Buddy system Team mates can assist you and enable you to gain access to new areas. In game, these sections still use the FPS view to keep you immersed in the action.



a new benchmark with co-star Elika allegedly sporting revolutionary AI.

But, really, Killzone 2 is about the basics of shooting. It's about pulling the trigger and enjoying the results. Every gun is extensively modelled, each component representing a real-world function. The design team is obsessed with communicating the weight and feel – physical models were produced so the motion capture actors could wield them during filming. "Every bullet you fire has an impact on the world around you," explains Ter Heide. "Not just in terms of the destructibility of the environments, but also to do with the enemies. We've implemented what we call the hit response system, where every bullet you put into a Helghast triggers a different kind of response. We blend motion capture information with physics impulses; it's based on the weapons you use and from where

you shoot. We want to make sure shooting feels exactly right." Our current concern, though, is that with fastidiously-modelled kickback, aiming feels too tricky. But make the shot and the effects are impressive.

Gunning for glory

A Helghast infantryman will collapse to his knees when he catches lead in the legs; get one in the shoulder and his arm flails wildly. There are moments like this, scenes of exhilarating sci-fi violence, when that fateful 2005 trailer comes to mind; eventually revealed as CGI. "Ah, *that* trailer," Ter Heide sighs. "Everyone who saw it bought into the concept of this very intense and cinematic experience of a war... I think we're delivering on that promise." The tone is upbeat but not deluded – it is the voice of someone who knows there is a lot to live up to, but feels that, after a long campaign, the tide of war has turned.

Brothers in Arms: Hell's Highway



Stop sighing. Yes, it's *another* WW2 shooter, but this one's all about creating the burden of responsibility by putting you in charge of a squad of soldiers liberating France. If they die it's your orders that got them dead. Perhaps surprisingly, rather than bloated battles, the focus is on intense but smaller scale encounters.

Pub Ubisoft Dev Gearbox Software ETA August

Fallout 3



Impossible to pigeonhole as just a shooter, Fallout 3 dumps you in post-apocalyptic America and says: have fun! Some chance. Giant mutants roam a scorched wilderness that's dotted with ramshackle settlements where you must try to find your father. An interesting twist is the VATS system, an RPG-style approach to combat that enables you to freeze time, stack up attacks, and then unleash them at once. There's also a Karma system that tracks your behaviour, so people treat you based on how naughty or nice you play. Hey, we're not here to make friends.

Pub TBC Dev Bethesda Softworks ETA Sep



Call of Duty World



Pub Activision Dev Treyarch ETA Nov

The Thin Red Line, without the philosophy



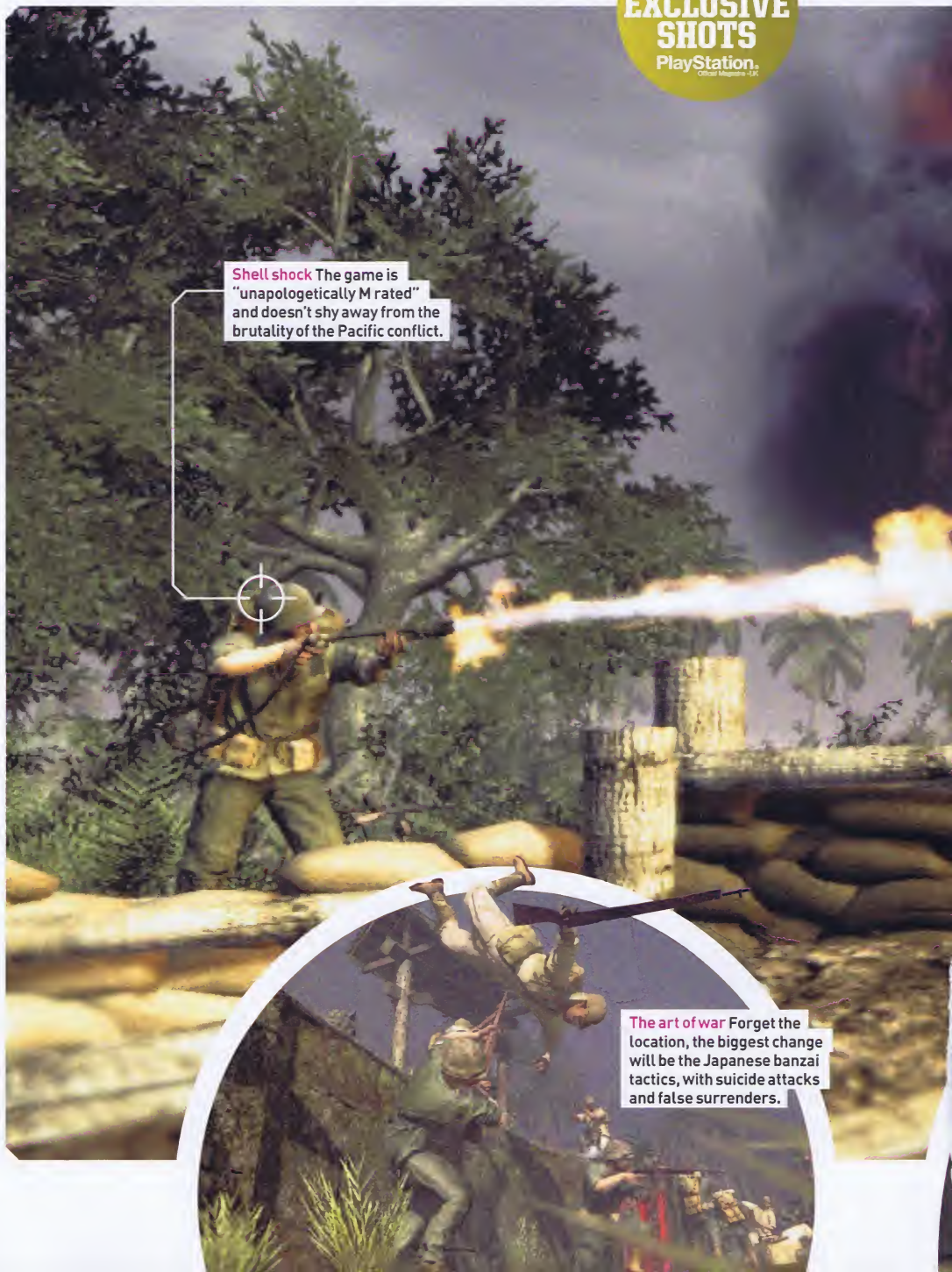
This feels like a huge gamble. Having taken the development reins from Infinity Ward, for Treyarch's follow up to the biggest shooter of 2007 (Call Of Duty has two developers on a rotating cycle) the series has ditched the popular modern setting and gone back to its WW2 roots.

Our first glimpse of the horrors of the Pacific theatre is a Japanese commander extinguishing a cigarette in the eyes of a screaming POW before slitting his throat. It's a vicious introduction to a bloodier war. The action is split between continents as you fight Japanese forces in the Pacific (for example, the US raid on Makin Island, a Japanese base used to launch air attacks into Allied territory) or storm Berlin with the Russians.

Guerrillas in the mist

With a new enemy comes a different type of warfare. The Japanese make great use of the Pacific's jungle terrain: digging tunnels, hiding in long grass and planting snipers in palm trees. All are great opportunities to test the flamethrower, a new weapon for the series. As it sprays a roaring sheet of fire over the grasslands, screams erupt and Japanese soldiers burst from the shrubbery, their clothes ablaze. The days of quaint WW2 shooters aren't just dead, they're being burned alive.

Joining new weapons is Call Of Duty's first experiment with co-op, with two-player split-screen or four-player online. The multiplayer system is also getting some new features with fresh perks and an as yet under wraps squad system. It's a good sign that while it's trying to reinvent the WW2 shooter, Treyarch isn't afraid to embrace what made COD4 so insanely successful.



Shell shock The game is "unapologetically M rated" and doesn't shy away from the brutality of the Pacific conflict.

The art of war Forget the location, the biggest change will be the Japanese banzai tactics, with suicide attacks and false surrenders.

feature

Call Of Duty: World At War

Wheel men As well as co-op and COD4's perks system, multiplayer introduces vehicles to take the weight off your marching boots.

At War

Defining weapon

Flamethrower It can burn through soft cover, clear Japanese tunnels and incinerate anyone hiding in undergrowth. Downside? Carrying canisters of nitrogen and petrol around the battlefield.



Sound off Treyarch has lined up what they call "iconic talent" for the voice acting, so expect to hear the dulcet tones of Saving Private Ryan's supporting cast.

feature

Mirror's Edge

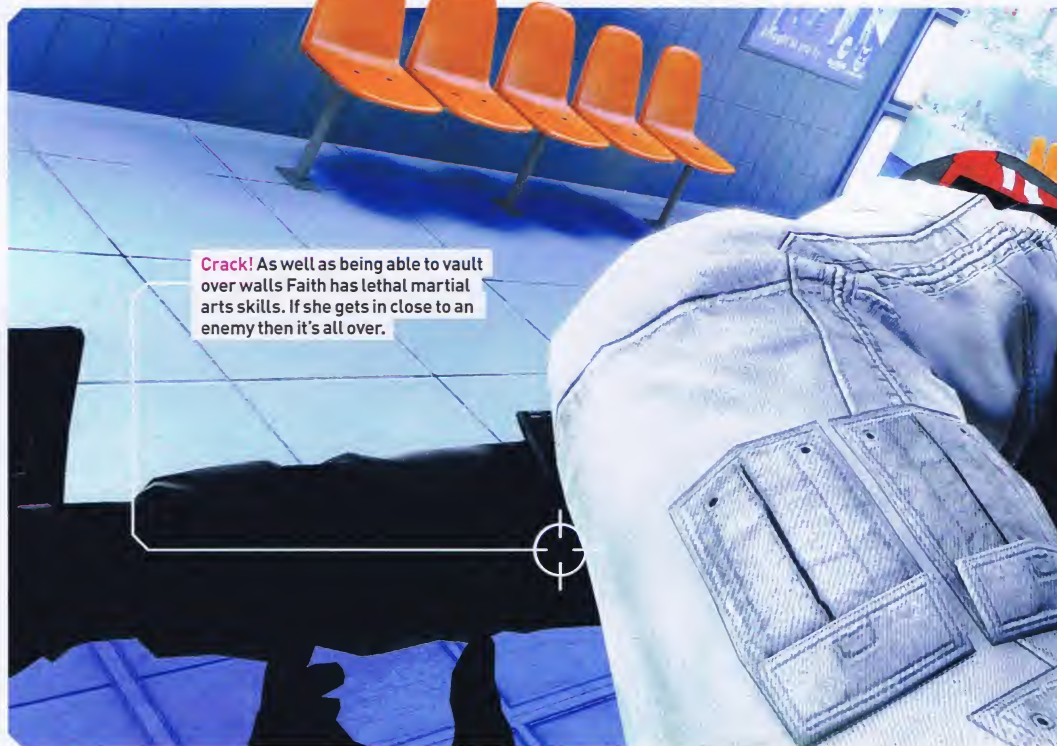
It isn't totally firearm-free, of course. Heroine Faith – a Parkour-style information courier known as a Runner – is still handy with a SPAS-12 when needs must. But it'll only slow her down when she uses her acrobatic free-running skills. So while she can and does use guns, they're quickly ditched to enable her to move across the city rooftops like a far cuter version of Altair from Assassin's Creed. The ability to vault over or slide under obstacles without breaking pace is a liberating experience, and the freedom of movement it provides is Mirror's Edge's big innovation. Developer Dice has poured its efforts into creating natural, believable motion – tweaking cameras and animation so that even simple stuff, like walking, feels utterly convincing.

Fear of heights

This motion is shown off to great effect in a level where Faith is at the bottom of a storm drain – a 100ft deep, 40ft wide concrete well. The police are closing in and escape means a series of wall runs between platforms, leaping into the air to swing from girders and scaling pipes to reach the surface. It's here where the Police close in, only to discover Faith's far from harmless. One cop's sent flying with a sliding tackle while another has the shotgun kicked from his hands, only for Faith to catch it and swing it back into his face in one smooth, teeth-shattering arc. The final officer gets a buckshot enema.

Faith then ditches the gun to free her hands, enabling her to scurry up a wall, vault a fence and sprint to freedom. Compared to more pedestrian shooters, where 'jump' is only used to clumsily vault low walls, Mirror's Edge feels genuinely groundbreaking. Simple controls and a convincing sense of bodily momentum provide a believable feel of moving through the world, making for a potentially revolutionary FPS.

EXCLUSIVE
SHOTS
PlayStation.
Official Magazine UK



Crack! As well as being able to vault over walls Faith has lethal martial arts skills. If she gets in close to an enemy then it's all over.

Action Freedom Story Skill

Pub EA Dev Dice ETA Nov

Mirror's

PS3's most intriguing shooter hates guns

feature

Aliens: Colonial Marines/They

Defining weapon

Your hands

The incredibly agile Faith can use guns but they cramp her style. If you do pick up a weapon to take out a cop blocking your path you'll have to ditch it to free your hands if you want to use Faith's free-running skills to make an acrobatic exit.

Halt! Faith's twin sister has been framed, arrested, and now the authorities are after her. The 'why?' is what you need to find out.

Aliens: Colonial Marines



22 years after seminal sci-fi horror, Aliens, hit screens, Gearbox is making an FPS to do it justice. The huge murderous ETs might get all the press, but the real stars are the marines. With four-player co-op, this is a squad-based shooter from the team that earned their stripes on the Brothers In Arms series. Taking on the Xenomorphs you'll face swarm attacks, siege situations and close encounters. Get ready marines; we're going on a bug hunt.

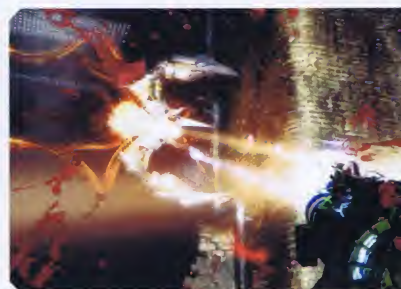
Pub Sega Dev Gearbox Software **ETA** 2009

They



The olden days of cycling through huge weapon inventories are gone. They's customisable gun system lets you tailor and expand a single firearm as you play, handy when you're trying to battle an army of phantom-controlled robots. You can bolster the strength of your weapon, improving its accuracy or fire rate, or you can get all mad professor and make your own grenade-launching sniper rifle. You can even change the colour and appearance of your piece, then use or trade it online. Pink AK-47 with underslung flamethrower anyone?

Pub IMC Dev Metropolis **ETA** 2009



Edge

In the aquatic world of Rapture it's all about choices. Which guns to upgrade, powers to use and whether to save or 'harvest' the freaky Little Sisters who wander about interfering with corpses.

Once a utopia where genetic manipulation gave people better looks, stronger bodies and special abilities, you discover the city's remnants after your plane crashes into the ocean. In the submerged metropolis Little Sisters harvest valuable genetic material, known as Adam, from the bodies that litter the buildings – the remains of a civil war that shattered the civilisation years earlier. Every move the girls make is watched by murderously protective Big Daddies – behemoths in diving suits who'll die (and kill) to save their tiny charges.

The thing is, you'll need



Story time The elaborate plot is full of set-pieces, with mad doctors, psychotic artists and, best of all, a gut-spinning twist.



Defining weapon

Upgraded machine gun The pistols, chemical throwers and machine guns you find amidst the rubble of Rapture can all be upgraded at Power To The People kiosks. As you add extra ammunition capacity or more power, the gun will take on a distinctly homemade look.



the Adam the Little Sisters collect to buy power-ups. So, do you kill the girls, netting more Adam, or cure them and reduce your harvest? Murder vs conscience. Not a choice you often have to make in an FPS.

Playing God

With enough Adam you can use powers – called plasmids – to shoot flames from your hands, stun Big Daddies with lightning bursts, summon attack squads of wasps or even turn your enemies against each other. There's more conventional firepower too: machine guns, crossbows and even grenade launchers, all of which can be modded.

For once the hype is justified. Bioshock is like no other FPS, with a profound atmosphere and a genuinely riveting story. Through the cackling thugs and Splicers (plasmid addled maniacs) or unearthed audio recordings and abandoned belongings, you'll hear a tale of hubris, loss and betrayal. It's a vivid and terrifying world and while PS3 owners have waited for what seems like forever to visit Rapture, every second you spend there will be worth it.

Daddy's girl The relationship between Big Daddies and their tiny charges is intense. Separate them and they'll mourn their loss.



Pub Take Two Dev 2K Marin ETA November

Bioshock

Twisted sisters and father figures



Shooters don't do horror well. It's hard to maintain a sense of fear when the player is toting an M4 Carbine. "What's out there?" Brrrap! "Nothing." Project Origin manages to pile on the scares pretty thickly, though. Strange experiments, horrific hallucinations and clone armies – it blends the supernatural elements of J-horror with heavy FPS action and Matrix-like slo-mo powers.

Be kind rewind

In fact your ability to slow time *is* the game. This isn't the first shooter with a 'focus' ability, but none have lavished as much attention on it as Monolith. A typical firefight has so much carnage, shrapnel, blood and bodies gracefully arcing through the air that you need to slow things down to really appreciate it. And it's crucial to gameplay; creating an ebb and flow to battles as you break cover, use your abilities to hose a room and then take shelter to recharge.

The creepy stuff comes from Alma, a dead psychic girl out for revenge after being experimented on and killed by her own father. If you think she sounds familiar it's because this is the *real* F.E.A.R. sequel – Sierra, the publisher of Monolith's original instalment, kept the name after the two split, hence the new title (apparently Sierra is working on its own F.E.A.R. 2, but with a new dev team).

Project Origin's merging of vengeful spirits and military experiments creates a fantastic mix of psychological and physical horror. Frantic battles against inhuman mutant clone soldiers give way to whispering voices and corridors awash with blood, creating a constant sense of dread. It helps that the AI is sharp, with opponents making good use of the environment to outwit you – vaulting over obstacles, for example. This is a shooter with a true dark side.

Clone wars The main bad guys in Project Origin are cloned soldiers known as Replicas, some of whom have been experimented on to enhance their abilities.



Project

Time is on your side, but the super-smart soldiers aren't



Pub Warner Brothers Dev Monolith ETA Early 2009



Defining weapon

Laser rifle Fires a sizzling beam of light that immolates everything it touches – which, in our hands, means people. Project Origin mixes 'near future' weapons with present day stuff like assault rifles and pistols.

Take it slow Key to the combat is your ability to slow down time, giving you a crucial edge and making for beautiful slo-mo battles.



Mad science Military experiments have led to sick creatures like the double-jointed Abomination.



Custody battle Confusingly, Alma from F.E.A.R. is in Project Origin, because the developer owns her.

Origin

feature

Legendary/Far Cry 2

Legendary



Sure, you can take out a Nazi at 20 metres with one eye shut, but how about a werewolf? You might be tooled up, but they can scale walls and gut you with a single paw swipe. Legendary is a fantastical FPS, and the rampaging monsters are down to you, Charles Deckard, an art thief who's managed to open Pandora's box. Before you can shut the troublesome trunk you'll need to face gryphons, minotaur, and fairy folk in locations like NYC and (what?) Durham.

Pub Atari **Dev** Spark Unlimited **ETA** Sep

Far Cry 2



Some people aren't going to like Far Cry 2. They'll be frightened by its vast, totally explorable African world. Terrified of the massively open-ended gameplay that enables you to use any weapon, tactic or vehicle you can find to complete a goal. And they'll probably be completely freaked out by the totally unpredictable AI that sees the guards' behaviour influenced by their need to socialise, rest and work. Everyone else, though, will take one look at Far Cry 2 and realise it's going to change the shooter landscape overnight.

Pub Ubisoft **Dev** Ubisoft Montreal **ETA** Autumn





USA Today With Europe crushed, the Chimera attack America and launch a huge offensive, devastating the entire country in days.



Charge The Grims are mindless Chimera who attack in huge numbers and use their speed to launch terrifying ambushes like the 'infected' from 28 Days Later.



Pub Sony Dev Insomniac ETA Nov

Resist



Defining weapon

Bullseye This Chimeran weapon is equal parts laser and machine gun – it can 'tag' opponents so bullets home in on them, and is typical of the inventive arsenal. Our fave? The brutal 'hedgehog' grenades that fire spikes.

Insomniac's 1950s-set alien sequel is primed to be PS3's biggest shooter – in every sense. For starters, there's the Leviathan pictured here, the 300ft boss that president Ted Price mentioned when we visited the studio last year. But everything is bigger. From the new US backdrop, to the battles themselves. One scene in Chicago, for example, sees a new breed of lolloping skeletal Chimera pour into an alleyway in their *hundreds*, rather than the handful of enemies from the original. Luckily, our hero Nathan Hale isn't alone – he's fighting alongside an elite unit called the Sentinels, who've also been exposed to Chimeran DNA and now have enhanced abilities. So don't worry about having to babysit them.

Let all go to the lobby

What's really exciting is the scale of the multiplayer options. There's a chunky co-op campaign, separate from the main game, where eight people can battle the Chimera together online. It's effectively a whole other story. There's also a huge competitive mode: matches feature 60 players, split into squads, battling to secure complementary objectives. Opening a door to let another team through, say. It's dynamic, too, with orders and goals changing as you fight. Of course Insomniac is also delivering a robust community element to keep track of scores, clans and other achievements. You didn't have any plans for November did you?

Cloverfield monster? The huge Leviathan is a major boss to defeat and one of several new Chimera revealed so far, along with the cloaked Chameleons and bestial Grims.

The Chimera take the USA by storm

ance 2

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HE'S SUAVE AND SOPHISTICATED
HE KNOWS FINE WINES AND FAST CARS
WOMEN THROW THEMSELVES AT HIM
(HE'S THE ONE ON THE RIGHT)

RATCHET IS IN PRISON FOR A CRIME HE DIDN'T COMMIT, CLANK'S NOW TAKEN THE LEAD. IS RATCHET DOOMED?
THE RATCHET AND CLANK STORY CONTINUES, BUT WITH A SPY THEMED TWIST. PACKING A DEVASTATING SELECTION OF NEW WEAPONS AND GADGETS,
AND DRESSED TO IMPRESS. WILL CLANK RISE TO THE OCCASION TO SAVE HIS FRIEND?

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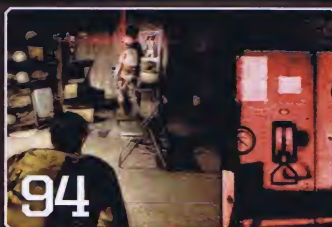
Our review code is tested on hi-def and standard-def TVs to ensure we know how games perform at both ends of the scale. Our HD setup is a 70" Sony Bravia with Dolby Digital 5.1 surround sound.

PlayStation® Official Magazine - UK Reviews

Your essential guide to every new release

Sony's horror remake, *Siren Blood Curse*, is extraordinary for two reasons. First, because it's the scariest experience we've had with our PS3 since that time we thought it was alive and wailing hungrily from underneath the TV in the middle of the night (turned out it was next door's baby). And secondly, because it's the first game to be made available as episodic content through the PlayStation Store. As such, it's something of an experiment – with only a few weeks to go, Sony has only just locked down how many episodes will be made available at once – and there's no telling how the new format will go down with the paying public. Find out exactly what we think of the game over the page.

Elsewhere *Ferrari Challenge* makes an impression on the tough PS3 racing field, *Battlefield* tries to show there's more to online shooting than COD4 and *The Bourne Conspiracy* is so secretive that even its star appears to be in disguise. Next month: *Soulcalibur IV*!



94

SIREN BLOOD CURSE

A remote village, a sea of blood, an army of undead cultists and impenetrable darkness. Welcome to Siren!



96

FERRARI CHALLENGE

Think System 3's sim is all branding and no balls? Think again – this is a dark horse entry into the PS3 race of racers.



100

THE BOURNE CONSPIRACY

Shoot! Fight! Drive! Press buttons exactly when instructed! Everyone's favourite superspy (sorry James, it's over) hits PS3.

How we score our reviews...

10 Essential

Instant classic that's as close as it gets to PlayStation perfection.

9 Outstanding

Highly recommended, and an investment you won't regret.

8 Very good

Mostly excellent, but held back by one or two minor flaws.

7 Good

Enjoyable, but with definite room for improvement. Rent it first.

6 Reasonable

A decent offering, but one that only satisfies in places.

5 Average

A game that is both fun and frustrating in equal measure.

4 Below average

Too flawed to be anything more than a brief curiosity.

3 Poor

A seriously flawed game with no long-term appeal.

2 Awful

A disgrace to the bargain bin. Avoid it as you would a bullet.

1 Horrific

Buy this shocker and watch your console self-combust in protest.

GOLD AWARD
PlayStation
Official Magazine

Our highest accolade

The gold award is presented to any game that we feel demonstrates significant innovation, near flawless gameplay, great graphics and long-lasting appeal.



▲ "No wait, darling, come back! This isn't how it looks!" Actually, this really isn't how it looks.

094

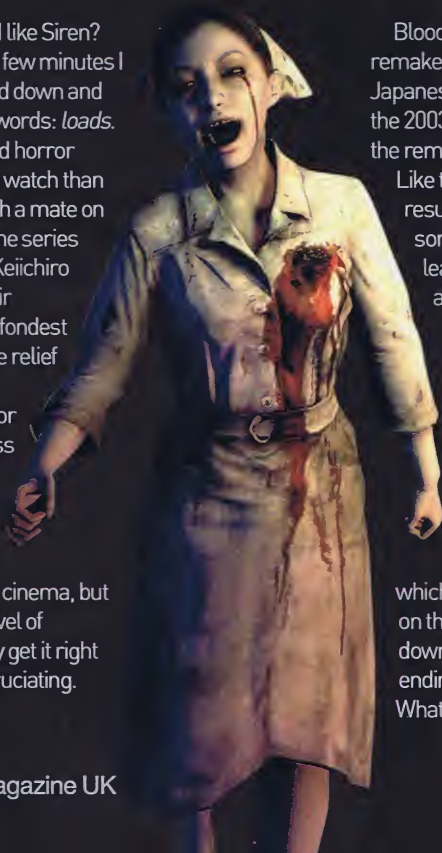
Survivor series

Siren Blood Curse

Sony's networked nightmare terrifies in instalments

You know how much I like Siren? So much that after a few minutes I wanted to put the pad down and never play it again. In other words: *loads*. The thing about a really good horror game is that it's more fun to watch than to play. Ever doubled-up with a mate on Resident Evil or Silent Hill (the series created by Siren's director Keiichiro Toyama, which explains their similarly desolate feel)? My fondest memory of Silent Hill 2 is the relief I felt when I'd explored the hellish meat-walled maze for long enough that I could pass the pad to someone else and relax for a little bit.

A good horror film will have you squirming in your seat and itching to leave the cinema, but games require that extra level of participation, and when they get it right the effect can be totally excruciating. Siren gets it right.



Blood Curse is actually a semi-remake of PS2's Forbidden Siren (the Japanese subtitle is 'New Translation'), the 2003 backwater horror centred on the remote Japanese village of Hanuda.

Like the original, it features a resurrection cult, a monster and some other bad things, all of which lead to the village being surrounded and semi-submerged in a sea of blood, with the inhabitants bleeding from the eyes and transformed into undead beings called shibito.

Chopped up

The big change this time is that the game is episodic, broken down into 12 parts which Sony plans to make available on the PlayStation Store in weekly downloadable instalments, each ending with a TV-style cliffhanger. What makes Siren particularly well



Info

Format PSN **ETA** Out now **Pub** Sony **Dev** Sony **Players** 1 **Web** snipurl.com/2ep5t **It's like** Painting your house black, turning the lights off and thinking about Satan and stuff.

suited to this format is that it's always featured an ensemble cast of playable characters. For the PS3 update they're drawn together under preposterous circumstances: an American news crew investigating the village is filming the cult's sacrificial ritual (really badly from the shaky footage on show), when suddenly American high school kid Howard Wright races in and interrupts. It's not made clear why Howard's hanging around in the woods at night in remotest Japan, but it's okay because before you get a chance to think about it, the ex-husband of the news crew reporter turns up *with their infant child*.

So, the story's a bit mad, but the truth is it really doesn't matter. The important



▲ No prizes for guessing that the smug-faced check-shirted Sam Monroe is a bit of a berk.



▲ Escaping the hospital as the helpless, weaponless Bella is predictably terrifying.

▼ Split-screen sightjacking – handy, so long as you don't walk straight into the murderous shibito you're spying on.



thing is that the characters become imperilled, and soon. Episode one kicks off with Howard looking for a way to call the police having bolted from the scene of the ritual. It's dark like actually being in the woods at night and being chased by murderous monsters would be dark, and there's an added videotape grain effect to make it all look extra impenetrable. Turn your flashlight off and you'll face a deathly void of empty black; turn it on and it'll cast lurching shadows on walls and floors as you direct it with the right stick.

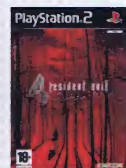
The controls are unwieldy, but it feels like a deliberate design decision. Survival horror has always featured obstructive handling – if you could pop zombie heads as if you were playing an FPS they wouldn't be scary. Though Blood Curse doesn't suffer from the fixed-camera contrivances of, say, Silent Hill, it does use an awkward over-the-shoulder perspective with movement and turning all controlled with the left stick, forcing you into big, terrifying blind turns.

Action isn't the focus of the game anyway. Rather than madly confronting the shibito,

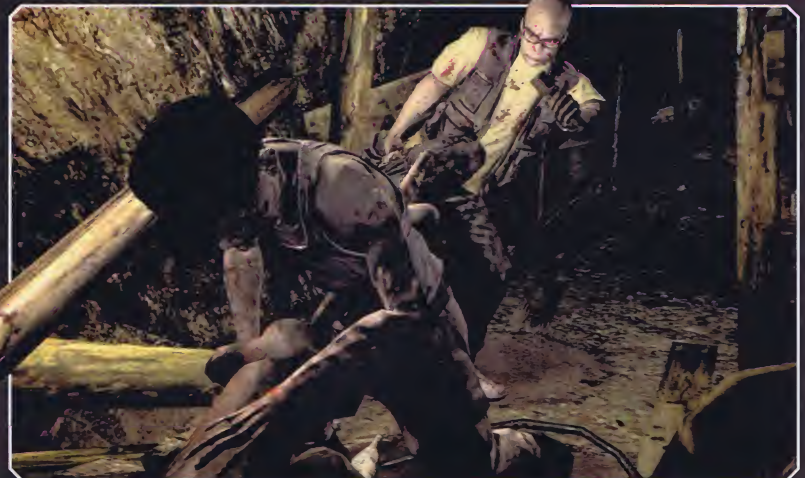
Like this? Play these



The Silent Hill Collection
The most consistently terrifying series on PlayStation bar none.
VERDICT 9



Resident Evil 4
Arguably PS2's greatest game, and a revolution for the Resi series.
VERDICT 10



your best tactic is to avoid them, using the series' unsettling innovation, sightjacking. Whereas the standard thrill of horror is based on getting close to the monsters, Siren takes you *inside* them, as certain characters have the ability to see through the eyes of the shibito.

Sight beyond sight

It's brilliant for two reasons. First, while you're looking through their eyes you also hear their agitated nightmare mumblings and see their jerky repetitive movements, the effect of which is totally unnerving. Secondly, nothing else in the survival horror canon compares to the soaring terror of seeing a murderous blood-eyed zombie shambling closer to your hiding place *through their* eyes. The effect is heightened in Blood Curse thanks to the fact that for the first time in the series you can move your own character at the same time as sightjacking,

catching glimpses of your own character flashing round a corner on one side of the screen as you use the other to creep past shibito sentries.

The only thing that might hold the game back is the format. I've played three episodes so far, and the length of each varies considerably. The first – a chunky one gig-plus download – lasts only 15 minutes but presumably comes with the core engine, while the third was a more satisfying 40-odd minutes. To compensate, Sony is planning to release the 12 episodes in groups of three, but even then it's questionable whether gamers will want to wait a week between sessions. Still, it's genuinely unsettling – wait until you stumble into *that*

bathroom looking for a place to hide only to find the bath filled with... – so unless the price (which is unconfirmed at time of writing) is extortionate, Siren is an essential download. **Nathan Ditum**

Scary-o-Meter

Just how frightening is Siren?



PlayStation.
Official Magazine - UK

8



Behold the FXX, a special version of the Enzo that's so spectacularly rare, you had to be invited to buy it.

096 **Magic marque**

Ferrari Challenge Trofeo Pirelli

Do you like cars? Is your favourite colour red? Come on in!

Info

Format: PS3
 ETA: Out now
 Pub: System 3
 Dev: Eutechnyx
 Players: 1-16
 Web: system3.com
 It's like the old days, when you had to unlock everything, but without a Suzuki Cappuccino in sight.

Ferrari Challenge's biggest problem is timing. Which is odd, considering it's a great game stuffed with many of the world's most exotic cars – how could anything else matter? Even so, if it had been released near the PS3's launch it would have stood out. You might all have bought it. But these days there's GRID, there's Burnout Paradise and there's Gran Turismo with its own Ferraris... there's a lot of astonishing stuff to choose from.

Consequently, any pretender to the crown has to master everything or define its niche pretty sharply. Ferrari Challenge doesn't do either. While it

clearly swims down at the deep, dark simulation end of the pool, it makes too many concessions to the shallow 'arcade' bit to totally please the fussy hardcore. Yet at the same time it's still rather serious and demanding for the casual player.

Seeing red

The big draw is the finely balanced, talent-testing handling of these brilliantly lurid cars, but enthusiasts will be disappointed to find that you start with nearly everything locked – cars, tracks, even difficulty levels are tucked away behind a wall of requirements. It's an old-fashioned attempt to make this a 'game', and has resulted in some awkward design, such as not being able to buy cars, no matter how much currency you've won, until you've unlocked them. And it's not even as if having a fast car too early could break the game – races are single-model. Yes, locked content means there are

rewards, but you never know what reward you're racing for anyway. Also, most people don't consider a higher difficulty level, or the track they've just raced on, to be a reward.

It would be far better to simply give us pretty much everything from the start – and admit that it's a sim rather than a game. As it is, once any serious players have dialled themselves into the responsive handling (a couple of races should do it) there's little or nothing to test them for a very long time. The AI just isn't that fast.

What you do in... Ferrari



The classic 250 GTO. Only 36 were made – one sold for \$5.5m in 1991. Not a family runabout.



▲ The F430 Challenge is the game's main car. Bruno Senna drove it at Silverstone last year.



▲ The 333 SP, designed for endurance racing, is outdated now, but still looks mint.



▲ The F430, but in banana yellow. Why would you? Seriously? Nice exhaust flames, though.

Eutechnyx claims the opposition adjusts itself to you, but if that's true the effect is both too subtle and far too long in coming. You can choose to qualify for the first race of each two-race event (you start the second where you finish the first), but I soon stopped doing this, as coming up from 16th to win was easy, even on a track I didn't know in a five-minute race (it's adjustable up to 45 minutes). On the other hand, I've watched casual players struggle just to stay on the circuit, and while the driving aids are very good, they can't but help but kill the dynamism that makes Ferrari Challenge worthwhile. They will help newbies learn – as will the optional tutorials – but they won't make it fun.

Swerve driver

AI opponents can be nasty as well as slow. Their attempts to block when they sense you coming through on the inside are often so wild, and so late, you can't do anything but plough into them. I took to bluffing and then switching back to the outside – frequently the other car will be so far offline it can't make the corner.

So far there's been lots of moaning, and look at that score! Though flawed in many small ways, the core of Ferrari Challenge is incredibly

solid. The F430s of the main mode are brilliant to race without driver aids, yet they're not the high point. Many other models are faster, sound better and are crazier to drive, and you can race them in the short championships or single races of Arcade, Trophy and Quick Races modes.

Even the slightly disappointing AI is less of an issue when you consider the 16-player online mode, which we'll be taking a closer look at after the game's release. There's even an online series planned to mirror the real Ferrari Challenge, with real-life prizes for the winners.

System 3 also has plans for downloadable content, promising car and track downloads (£3.99) alongside driver and livery updates (free) for at least six months. Other updates are also in the works, such as higher difficulties, the ability to roll – it's just been cleared legally – and even the iconic F1 cars.

This wants to be a popular, mass-market game, but it's niche. It's a serious, focused and for the most part excellent sim that's more dynamic than Gran Turismo

Prologue. A fantastic drive, then – maybe not for the many, but for the passionate Ferrari Tiffosi, this is going to be automotive porn.

Steve Williams



PlayList

Essential tunes to download this month

Weezer

Format Album ETA Out now Price £7.99

Weezer return with what amounts to their third self-titled album (fans are calling it 'The Red Album'). Expect the usual syrupy guitar fuzz and sweet melodies – but also a few curveballs: on Greatest Man That Ever Lived they try gangsta rap, dawg. myspace.com/weezer



Roisin Murphy

Format Track ETA 7 July Price £0.79

Former Moloko frontgirl, offbeat fashion icon and all-round game lass Roisin Murphy charms the pants off you all over again with this cut from last year's *Overpowered*. All big Hoover basslines and come-hither vocals, this possibly saucy paean to messing around with a camera out-Kyies Kylie for sass, hooks and probably silly costumes. myspace.com/roisinmurphy



Hercules And Love Affair

Format Track ETA 7 July Price £0.79

New York nu-disco wunderkind Andy Butler turns his hand to the bleeps and bass of classic Chicago house. Heady and hedonistic, *You Belong* is the sort of dancefloor elegy that'll get bodies writhing. myspace.com/herculesandloveaffair



Download of the month

CSS Donkey

Format Album ETA 21 July Price £7.99

The second album from party-starting Brazilian girl punks CSS is a day-glo blend of bouncy playground raps, chugging guitars and wriggly rave grooves. Best track is 'Left Behind', a poison pen letter to an ex-squeeze powered by lurid '80s keyboards. myspace.com/canseidesersexy





▲ The armoured jeep is fast, hard and provides great mobile cover.

Gold star

Battlefield Bad Company

Rather than another grim war sim, this is the comedy Call Of Duty

War games just don't do funny. Partly because men being blown up isn't exactly comedy gold, but also because trying to create barrack room laughs invariably sounds forced or, worse, borderline-offensive. (Hang your heads, Army Of Two.) But – whisper it – *Bad Company* is funny... In places. Like finding yourself bouncing over a despot's golf course in an electric cart, squad-mates hanging on for dear life and a Russian tank in hot pursuit. But thanks to sharply drawn characters, the relatively tight script and offbeat set-pieces, *Bad Company* is elevated from what could have been just another fairly competent FPS to something with a lot more personality.

The game gets two important things right from the outset. First, the story manages to be both entertaining and dramatic. Ending *Battlefield*'s proclivity for functional (read: non-existent) single-player plots, this outing casts you as a new recruit to B(ad) Company,

Info

Format PS3
ETA Out now
Pub EA Dev
Dice Players 1-24
Web badcompany.ea.com
It's like Starring in your very own subversive war comedy, but with no fear of preachy pacifist undertones.

joining its other expendable loose cannons, in a bullion-chasing plot inspired by *Kelly's Heroes* and its Gulf War remake, *Three Kings*. It kicks off when one of the team accidentally crosses a border mid-mission and effectively 'invades' a neutral country, sending the squad AWOL as they hunt a consignment of mercenary gold.

Gun worship

The game's second major strength is that it understands that a shooter stands or falls on its guns and gadgets. There are no weak links in the game's

arsenal, only excitingly angry, noisy tools designed for harvesting death. From sniper rifles, SMGs and rocket launchers, to fixed gun emplacements, C4 charges and tanks, every weapon looks, sounds and feels exhilarating and deadly. Their potency is heightened by the incredible destruction you can inflict on the game world. Ripping chunks of buildings out with grenades, shattering wooden huts, mowing down tree-line cover to expose enemies. A handful of items – such as laser designators for mortar attacks – trigger so much damage that they actually threaten to tip

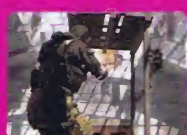
Influences A roll call of *Bad Company*'s rogue elements



Three Kings



The Dirty Dozen



Call Of Duty 4



GTA IV



Kelly's Heroes



the advantage too far in your favour.

However, developer Dice also recognises that part of the fun is being forced to choose what you take into battle, and living (or dying) with the consequences. As such you're able to carry just one rifle, with grenades, plus one specialist gadget – the laser designators fit here, along with a power tool to fix damaged vehicles, RPGs and so on.

Sharp divide

Your last bit of kit is a syringe, which stands in for the usual medi-kits. Opinion is split on this due to its relatively unwieldy operation – you equip it with **[X]** before pressing **[R2]** to thwack it into your chest. But while some find it fiddly, I reckon the minor effort required to use it in a firefight offsets its endless capacity and brief reset time.

Similarly worthy of praise is Bad Company's use of open maps. Instead of forcing you along a narrow playable corridor in order to tick off cascading objectives, the game opens up a sizable region of the full chapter map for each sub-mission, enabling you to

shake things up and flank enemies, go for shock and awe at the controls of a tank or patrol boat, or simply sneak up to strategic targets on-foot.

In practice, though, the killjoy AI performs a surgical strike on this push for player freedom. With enemy units invisible on your map until alerted it pays to keep one eye on the horizon. However, this tactic is rendered useless by the enemy AI's clairvoyant ability to spot you from what seems like miles away. Worse, the enemies are all super accurate – seemingly able to shoot a greenfly off a leaf in the next field.

As you'd expect from a series built around muscular online fragging, Bad Company delivers fast, aggressive network action on cleverly designed maps. Gold Rush is the only mode – one team has to protect three or more crates of gold from the other. Personality, guns and destruction are Bad

Company's strongest cards and it plays them hard. In fact, if it weren't for the absurdly sharp enemy AI, it would be close to an essential purchase.

Paul Fitzpatrick



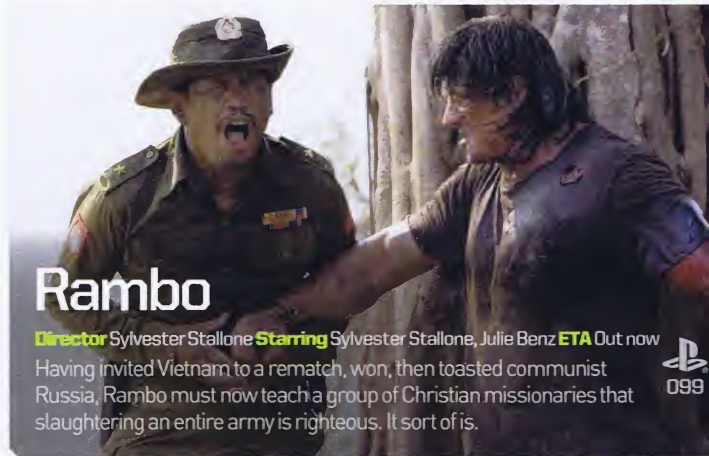
BluMovies

HD films to feed your next-gen disc player



The Orphanage

Director Juan Antonio Bayona **Starring** Belén Rueda, Fernando Cayo **ETA** Out now
Spanish chiller that avoids cheap jumps – except for one or two *really* good ones – in favour of carefully meted out emotional devastation. A foxy foster mother and her husband re-open an old orphanage, but dangerous secrets lurk in both the looming Victorian building and the couple's relationship with their lively adopted son...



Rambo

Director Sylvester Stallone **Starring** Sylvester Stallone, Julie Benz **ETA** Out now
Having invited Vietnam to a rematch, won, then toasted communist Russia, Rambo must now teach a group of Christian missionaries that slaughtering an entire army is righteous. It sort of is.



Diary Of The Dead

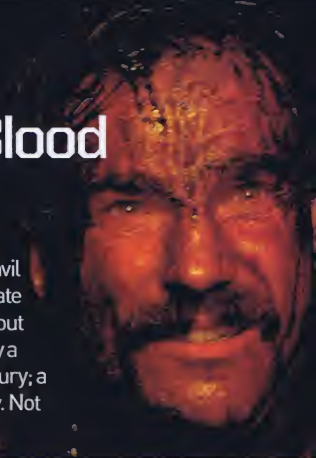
Director George A Romero **Starring** Joshua Close, Megan Park **ETA** Out now
Weird post-YouTube, camera phone-savvy remake of Night Of The Living Dead, with the zombie outbreak revisited through the handcam testimony of several students. Behind the wobbly aesthetic, the setups and scares are the same – and like the zombies, they're stinking up the place.

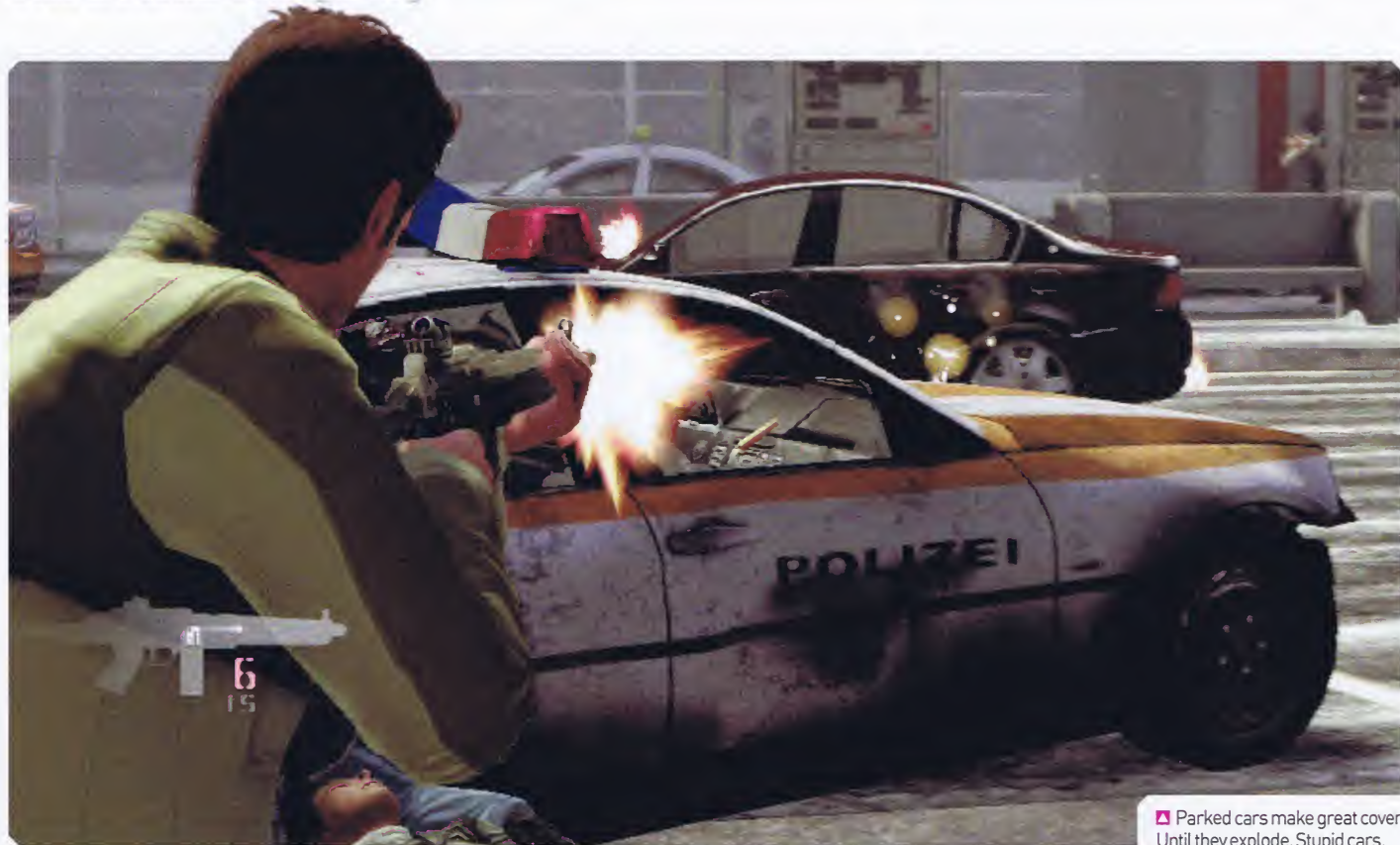
Movie of the month

There Will Be Blood

Director Paul Thomas Anderson **Starring** Daniel Day Lewis, Paul Dano **ETA** Out now

DDL's astonishing performance as black-hearted oil man Daniel Plainview is the anvil upon which this movie beats out its desolate view of mankind. On the surface a film about the early 20th century oil rush, it's actually a mesmeric nightmare of greed, God, and fury; a full account of humanity's grasping futility. Not a 'seal-the-deal' date movie, then.





▲ Parked cars make great cover. Until they explode. Stupid cars.

Amnesiac espionage

Robert Ludlum's The Bourne Conspiracy

Jason doesn't recognise himself, and neither do we...

Imagine settling down for a night of gaming, looking forward to shootouts, punch-ups and maybe even a little driving. Now picture a friend sat by you on the sofa, grabbing the pad out of your hand every time things get exciting, 'just to help do the difficult bits'. Now imagine that irritant isn't a friend at all, but the very game you're playing – specifically, The Bourne Conspiracy. Based on the films in all but name (presumably Robert Ludlum's comes cheaper than Matt Damon's) this is the thrilling story of an elite agent hunted by the government that trained him. But! Thanks to a mix of quick-time events and a big fat cheater's button, you won't really be playing the exciting bits at all.

Hello again, quick-time events. Yes, whether you're in a gun fight or making a daring escape, sooner or later the action switches to an interactive cut-scene, the success of which depends on your ability

Like this? Play these



MGS4: Guns Of The Patriots

Vast, immersive and mad, Snake's last stand is an essential purchase for espionage fans.

VERDICT 10



Stranglehold

The same mix of martial arts and gun play, but with Woo's unmistakable style.

VERDICT 8

to press a single button when prompted on-screen. The mechanic itself isn't the problem – God Of War has shown it can be effective when restricted to the most gruesome kills and memorable moments – but here they're rolled out every time Bourne has to knock a grunt to the floor or leap onto a ledge. The worst example comes during one of the flashback missions through which Bourne relives past assignments. I've spent years perfecting my headshots, so when popping the objective was reduced to hitting **R1** when I was told instead of actually *aiming*, I felt robbed.

Work shy spy

That feeling soon becomes familiar. When you're not slavishly following sequences of **X**s and **A**s, you're often skipping all the hard work and using your special move adrenaline meter. In hand-to-hand combat successful slaps build



Info

Format PS3 **ETA** Out now
Pub Sierra **Dev** High Moon
Players 1 **Web** bourne.thegame.com
It's like Hiring The Bourne Ultimatum and finding Spy Kids in the box.

up adrenaline, and when the gauge is full you can perform takedowns to finish off the hired muscle. The combat isn't exactly varied, though – there are only two attack buttons and a total of eight combos – and if the idiot-friendly finishing moves are supposed to add depth, they're not fooling anybody. The shooting takedowns are even worse, triggering an instant kill shot so long as you hit the required button at the right moment.

When you're not using easy-snee the gunplay is good, with more than a whiff of Uncharted about it. There aren't a lot of weapons but the ones you do get have a proper kick to them, and the cover system makes big battles a pleasure.



Despite looking like an exchange student, your martial arts are strong.



Bourne regretted giving his Octo-camo suit to the Sue Ryder shop.

A highlight is chasing through a metro tunnel, sliding into bolt-holes to dodge bullets and oncoming trains while pumping shotgun rounds into approaching enemies. Get too close though, and it all goes wrong – instead of shooting your attacker point blank in the face (which I hear is a pretty effective tactic), Bourne puts away the gun and goes hand-to-hand. Uh, why?

Va va voom

Remember the annoying friend who kept stealing the pad? Well he's also a car salesman and he really, really wants you to buy a Mini. For the iconic car chase scene through Paris, Marie's battered old Mini has been replaced with a shiny new BMW one, and as you run tedious circuits through the city you pass the brightly lit Mini dealership more than once. You say authenticity, we say heavy-handed product placement.

The annoying thing is that it looks great – detailed environments, realistic faces and brutal action. Matt Damon wouldn't sign, so Stan Bland has been called in to play the



Mini adventure? Not so much. Doing laps of Paris is a low compared to the shooting.

amnesiac agent. It's a problem, though, when your hero's knitwear is more arresting than his face – and this Bourne is devoid of charisma. It's like they got Affleck instead.

Given the quality of the source material, if as much time had been spent on creating a control system that really engaged the player as rendering Bourne's delightful jumper, this could have been a quality slice of spying. What we've got here, however, is a game that's either incapable of coming up with a way to put you in charge of those

incredible cinematic moments, or simply doesn't trust you with them. A forgettable experience, then.

Rachel Weber



Japan Watch

This month's overseas action in a nutshell



Tears to Tiara: Kakan no Daichi

Format PS3 Pub Aquaplus Subtitles No

Ditching the lo-fi isometric visuals of your usual strategic RPG in favour of some proper next-gen spit and polish, Tears to Tiara features an escapee human sacrifice who falls for the very demon king she was due to have her steaming gizzards torn out to honour. I give them two months.



Vampire Rain: Altered Species

Format PS3 Pub AQ Interactive Subtitles No

Given that life is already a 'rain-soaked hell on Earth' blighted by 'hidden horrors' this Syphon Filter-meets-Nosferatu actioner from one of the team behind Sonic has its work cut out. Still, respect for avoiding the cliché of making the coffin dodgers look like size-zero male models.

101



Clannad

Format PSP Pub Prototype Subtitles No

No relation to the Enya-fronted Celtic mimsy-merchants, this tragedy-steeped 'visual novel' tells the story of star-crossed teen lovers with actual gameplay reduced to a handful of decision points. (Insert MGS4 joke here.) Seriously, I know there's a recession on, but is it just me or have Japanese developers stopped trying?

Exotic Boxart Of The Month



Umihara Kawase Portable

Reckon you've got an open mind? Open enough to accept a game in which a girl uses an elastic rope with a fishing lure on the end to battle evil? Move along...



Suzumiya Haruhi no Yakusoku

Every picture tells a story, and this one nearly ended with me sleeping in the car after the cover was glimpsed on the laptop by Mrs Japan Watch.



Prism Ark: Awake

It's a little-known scientific fact that high concentrations of the colour pink, such as found on the box of Prism Ark, can only be seen by girls, and sex pests. Yeah, it's blank to us too.

Barely scary

Alone In The Dark

Veteran horror series trips on the pavement

Us survival horror fans have faced a lot of enemies over the years. Busty nurses, zombie dogs, camera shy ghosts, all well and good. But cracks in the pavement? Unless you're a city surveyor, decaying Tarmac is unlikely to give you nightmares. Still, the malevolent fissures have an annoying habit of swallowing people whole, so it's up to Edward Carnby, occult investigator and amnesia sufferer, to save New York.

Monster mash

The action focuses on Central Park, deserted museums and – yay – the sewers, but even by PS2 standards the world looks grey and unloved. It's perhaps an act of mercy, then, that shutting your eyes plays a major part of the game. With your lids clamped useful objects like levers and enemy weak points glow white. Why rely on headshots when you can

bumble around blindly looking for a monster's radioactive kidney?

The ghouls are a weak cocktail of zombies, tentacle bats and boring blood-and-blade mutations that'd struggle to make Silent Hill's B team. Ammo is scarce, so you'll learn to rely on slowly bludgeoning zombies to death with furniture and running really fast. It makes you feel more like an angry removal man than a professional ghoul slayer. Worst of all, it never feels even vaguely scary. The puzzles are simple to solve, largely because the environments are so sparse – if you find anything, chances are it'll be vital. Look for bins to smash doors, gas canisters to burn debris or the old favourite: electrical panels.

The good news for horror fans? This beast only shares a story with the PS3 game, due out later this year. So in light of that, we say wait... And pray. **Rachel Weber**



Info

Format PS2 ETA Out now
 Pub Atari Dev Hydravision
 Players 1 Web uk.atari.com/
 ps2/alone-in-the-dark-232.html
 It's like Playing blind man's buff
 in the house of horrors.



▲ The roof, the roof, the roof is on fire. So get out, dumbass



▲ "Sir, don't jump! The PS3 version might be okay!"

Balls up

Top Spin 3

Virtua rival double faults on controls



▲ Players run like they've been dosed with horse tranquilliser.

▶ It's pretty, but the matches are joyless compared to VT3's.



Why would anyone make a game with not one but two sets of crippled controls? The massively frustrating thing about Top Spin 3 is that it's a good-looking and solid tennis title, that's spoiled only by an unnecessarily intricate interface which seems determined to leave its players with fingers like a dead bird's legs.

There's a choice of simplified face-button controls for easy access or a deeper analogue system built around the right stick for tougher but more precise strokes. The simpler method is similar to Virtua Tennis 3 – you swing at the ball when you release the buttons rather than when you press them, and the longer you hold on, the harder your hit. The problem is that the players – all famous faces like Federer, Nadal, Sharapova – move unrealistically slowly, taking a half second to lumber up to speed and another to stop,

which makes the timing frustratingly haphazard and often leaves you swinging wildly at air.

The advanced controls aren't much better. Like in the 2K hockey series, they map the motion of the right stick directly onto the racquet in what should be an intuitive, precise system. The problem is that you aim shots using the left stick, switching from the direction in which you're moving to the direction in which you want to hit the ball at the last second. This means flicking the sticks in different directions, at different speeds, at the same time, sometimes while holding **L2** or **R2** to pull off risk shots. It's like juggling flaming chainsaws while riding a

unicycle, and it stops you caring about anything else – the career mode, custom player creation, online matches – except maybe wishing you'd bought Virtua Tennis 3 instead. **Nathan Ditum**



Info

Format PS3 ETA Out now
 Pub Take Two Dev PAM Players 1-4 Web
 topspin3thegame.com It's like
 Those weird dreams where it feels
 like you're moving through water, only
 this time you're Maria Sharapova.



Spy ware

Secret Agent Clank

Our favourite sidekick goes solo

When Ratchet's thrown in jail for robbing a massive precious stone called The Eye Of Infinity at the start of this platforming spin-off, it raises two questions. First, does Ratchet's regular sidekick Clank have the metal cajones required to take centre stage and rescue his fuzzy boss? Secondly, isn't a Ratchet & Clank game without the main star going to be a big bag of spanners?

The answers are 'duh', and 'absolutely not'. Reinvented as a slick tuxedo'd spy, Clank sets about proving Ratchet's innocence by stealthing through heavily guarded museums, wowing women with rhythm action dancing, and reducing mechanical enemies to bolts.

Clank's spy kit contains some ace new gear. Pick of the bunch is the Holo Monocle, which photographs passing guards and camouflages Clank using their image, although for pure practicality you can't beat the Blackout Pen, which knocks out nasty-to-navigate laser grids with big gloops of gunk.

Jailhouse rock

As for how the game copes without a playable Ratchet, that's a trick question. In a role reversal from the main



Info

Format PSP **ETA** Now
Pub Sony **Dev** High Impact
Players 1 **Web** snipurl.com/2008j **It's like** Ratchet & Clank, only this time it's Clank & Ratchet.



▲ Clank fends off attackers in the prison showers. Never thought we'd write that...

series the fallen hero turns up between Clank's levels, fighting hordes of villains in prison-based arena combat. Meanwhile, idiot-at-large Captain Qwark also makes an appearance, battling bosses while dictating his biography to a cynical robot (it all makes sense in the end, promise), and Clank's Gadgetbots return to hack security systems in pace-shifting puzzles.

So, Secret Agent Clank doesn't stray far at all from the classic R&C formula. Bad news if you're

after something brand new, but great if you're happy with their winning mix of firepower and smart laughs.

Kim Richards

PlayStation.
Official Magazine UK

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Release Schedule

Coming soon to a PlayStation near you

	Publisher	ETA	Format
Elefunk	Sony	Jul	PSN
PixelJunk Eden	Sony	Jul	PSN
Siren Blood Curse	Sony	Jul	PSN
Soulcalibur IV	Ubisoft	1 Aug	PS3
Madden NFL 09	EA	15 Aug	Multi
Brothers In Arms Hell's Highway	Ubisoft	22 Aug	PS3
Tiger Woods 09	EA	Aug	Multi
Wipeout HD	Sony	Aug	PSN
Alone In The Dark	Atari	Sep	PS3
Facebreaker	EA	5 Sep	PS3
Baja	THQ	12 Sep	PS3
FIFA 09	EA	Sep	Multi
Leisure Suit Larry Box Office Bust	Sierra	Sep	PS3
Mercenaries 2: World In Flames	EA	Sep	PS3
Midnight Club Los Angeles	Rockstar	Sep	PS3
Monster Madness Grave Danger	South Peak	Sep	PS3
NHL 09	EA	Sep	Multi
Pure	Disney	Sep	PS3
SBK 08	Black Bean	Sep	PS3
Silent Hill Homecoming	Konami	Sep	PS3
SOCOM Confrontation	Sony	Sep	PS3
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	Activision	Sep	PS3
Tiberium	EA	Sep	PS3
TNA Impact	Midway	Sep	PS3, PS2
Tom Clancy's Hawk	Ubisoft	Sep	PS3
Valkyria Chronicles	Sega	Sep	PS3
Fallout 3	Bethesda	Oct	PS3
Far Cry 2	Ubisoft	Oct	PS3
Fracture	Activision	Oct	PS3
Gran Turismo 5	Sony	Oct	PS3
Lego Batman	Warner Bros	Oct	PS3
Little Big Planet	Sony	Oct	PS3
NBA 09	EA	Oct	Multi
Prototype	Sierra	Oct	PS3
Saints Row 2	THQ	Oct	PS3
Tom Clancy's Endwar	Ubisoft	Oct	PS3
Smackdown vs Raw 2009	THQ	Nov	Multi
50 Cent: Blood On The Sand	Sierra	Nov	PS3
Mirror's Edge	EA	Nov	PS3
Resistance 2	Sony	Nov	PS3
Killzone 2	Sony	Feb 09	PS3

! All release dates are accurate at time of press but liable to change.



READY MADE EXCUSE #20

Pull a sickie for... The Force Unleashed

“Yeah, I'm *this* close to being able to levitate the wife's Volvo Estate. Just another couple of weeks off and I'll basically be a Jedi Knight...”

Second-class strummer

Guitar Hero Aerosmith

This ego trip is all filler, no killer



▲ Steve Tyler's twitchy style is perfectly recreated, but guest star Run DMC steals the show.



Competition

Want to rock for real? We have two Guitar Hero branded electric guitars to give away! Just answer this question to be in with a chance: Which film used Aerosmith's I Don't Want to Miss A Thing for its soundtrack? a) Armageddon b) Titanic c) Flubber? Text Rock then your answer followed by your name and address to 87474 or email opm@futurenet.co.uk. See page 39 for full terms and conditions.

Aerosmith are good at quite a few things – selling zillions of records, conceiving Liv Tyler and wearing unfeasibly tight unitards to name but a few. Conspicuously absent from that list, though, is the ability to inspire a decent videogame, and from the evidence here it won't be appearing any time soon. The concept is fine: take the same old Guitar Hero gameplay, except instead of cartoon nobodies this time you play as the wrinkly rockers. Every set, from Nipmuc high school onwards, represents a real chapter from the band's history in which you play as the supporting act before taking centre stage.

Battle of the bland

The trouble is, the selection of Aerosmith tracks just doesn't measure up. The game's real highlights belong to the support acts, like She Sells Sanctuary by The Cult and a

Info

Format PS3 ETA Out now Pub
Activision Dev Neversoft Players
1-2 Web guitarherogame.com
It's like Cryin' instead of Amazing.

cover of Mott The Hoople's All The Young Dudes. Sure, Walk This Way and Livin' On The Edge are classics, but by the time you actually get to them your enthusiasm will have been stripped away by round after round of droning filler. The game skips most of their 1990s hits like Crazy and I Don't Want To Miss A Thing, and replaces them with unrecognisable songs from the 1970s, or forgettable current releases.

The film clips between sets sum up the problem with the whole game. The band mumble through bone-dry anecdotes of their raawk past with all the passion of weary weathermen. Where are the tales of excess, of groupie-and-gerbil-related scandals? There's no personality here, no verve or wit or energy. Add to that a line-up of mostly weak songs and the end result is more awkward side project than greatest hits. **Rachel Weber**



Fatal Inertia Ex

Format PSN ETA Out now Pub Koei



Reckless speed and super sexy visuals. If you're going to try and rip off Wipeout, it's important to cover those two basic principles. In a fiendish clever move to appear original, this wearying racer avoids both those exciting clichés and instead serves up fugly ships chugging along even fuglier tracks. The graphics are jagged even at the painfully slow speeds and things only improve when the track becomes engulfed in a sandstorm, mainly because most of the hideous scenery is obscured. Even the weapons you pick up during races, such as magnets (*magnets!*) and depressingly useless tow ropes, are dull. And the eight-way multiplayer is only for those who have seven friends they can afford to throw away. **Rachel Weber**



Wolf Of The Battlefield Commando 3

Format PSN ETA Out now Pub Capcom



This arcade revival is just like wandering down memory lane, if memory lane is in Baghdad and you're a Para. This top-down shooter is all about blasting everything that moves and throwing grenades at the stuff that doesn't. Tactics are minimal, just make sure your gun is pointing forwards and something will die. It might not have brains, but it does have rocket launchers, machine guns and *really* big explosions. Three-player online means co-operative carnage and the chance to torture yourself with high-score whoring leader boards. **Rachel Weber**



1942: Joint Strike

Format PSN ETA Out now Pub Capcom

If being a WW2 fighter pilot is this satisfying, sign me up next time the Nazis come knocking (hopefully never, obviously, but just in case). Retro top-down shooting beefed up with lasers, bombs and gargantuan bosses. **Rachel Weber**

SBK 08 Super World Champ'ship

Format PS2 ETA Out now Pub Black Bean

Preaching to the choir, SBK 08 gives its leather-clad faithful predictably robust, fully customisable racing with updated rosters, tracks and bikes, plus eight-strong online races. To everyone else it gives a frustratingly unwieldy experience not unlike trying to wrestle a sofa up a narrow stairwell. **Paul Fitzpatrick**



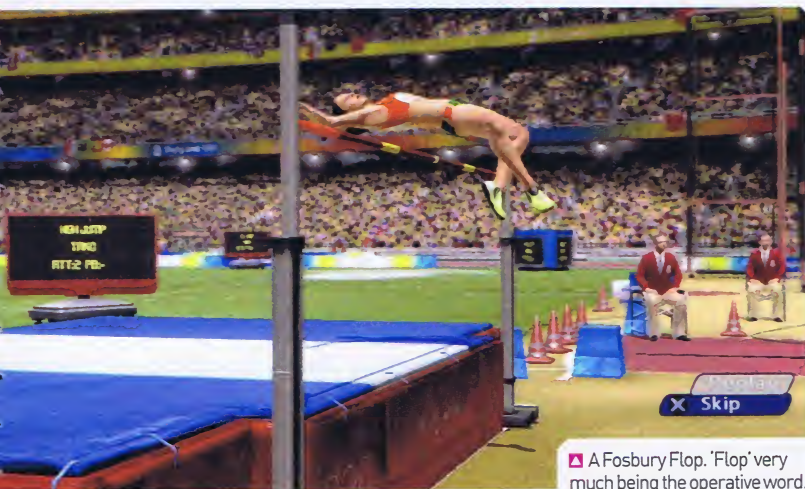
Everybody's Golf 2

Format PSP ETA Out now Pub Sony



Beneath the Hello Kitty-grade cuteness lurks a quality sim that satisfies and challenges in equal amounts. This PSP sequel piles on the apple-cheeked charm with more characters (24, up from 10), double the courses (12 this time), and some 300+ unlockable items (monkey heads, shuriken, brooms, gas masks) with which to customise your happy golfer. Also new is a 16-player WiFi mode to complement the original's eight-player LAN tournaments. And it's still an easy going triumph; the effervescent charm, sun-drenched courses and insidious gameplay soon had me cheering every hollow plunk. Delightful but requiring a deft touch to master, this really is golf for everybody. **Paul Fitzpatrick**





▲ A Fosbury Flop. 'Flop' very much being the operative word.

Olympic shames

Beijing 2008

Buy this and you'll need a drugs test

Is playing this somehow a silent endorsement of Chinese repression in Tibet? It certainly felt like there was some repressing going on. Mainly of my index fingers, which still throb days after the game was thrown, discus-style, into the bin. It's exactly as bad as you expect, and then a bit worse. There are 35 events spread across track, field, gym and pool. These use timed button presses or stick movements in combination with on-screen meters of every imaginable flavour, and in terms of execution they lurch between barely adequate and WTF?

None of them are what could conventionally be described as fun. The floor routine uses a tidy rhythm action mechanic, but even that pales immediately as you realise the animation doesn't change regardless of performance, and selecting a harder setting only speeds things up. Most events are just dull, but sprinting is ludicrous. It uses a hair-trigger mechanism that invariably means you false start or get left for dead, then it's [sigh] hammering buttons until crippling osteoporosis sets in. Diving, though, is the absolute pits. Here you have to rotate the sticks at different speeds to trace the path of on-screen balls. Which is counter-intuitive like patting your head while rubbing your stomach. While standing in a burning building.

The one event that approached enjoyment

Info
Format PS3 ETA Out now
Pub Sega Dev Eurocom
Players 1-4 Web snipurl.com/210to It's like Paula Radcliffe taking a hammer to your fingers.



▲ Events mix old-skool button-bashing and rhythm-based timing. Neither are much fun.

was rapid pistol shooting. And then only because it confirmed what a chillingly dead-eyed shot Call Of Duty 4 has made me. Oh, and forget the idea of online play – these servers are going to be bare like LiLo's bum. The only reason this doesn't score even lower is because, as a Eurovision-style car crash, there's perhaps some laughs to be

had with friends. But by no means 40 quid's worth. Unlike poor old Konnie Huq, we recommend steering clear of anything to do with shambles. **Tim Clark**



Straight to bargain bin

With Nathan Ditum



The only reason anyone in their right mind would play **Top Trumps: Doctor Who** on PS2 rather than in real life with the much cheaper physical set of cards is if they have no friends. And as a sci-fi fan considering spending 30 bar on an interactive spreadsheet featuring David Tennant's face, you've got nothing to worry about there, right? For no apparent reason the whole thing – and by 'the whole thing' I, of course, mean 'the mindless process of repeatedly comparing numbers' – plays out against an electrified grid of purple and green hexagons which looks a bit like Blockbusters might during a psychedelic power surge. Points are awarded for disguising the total absence of gameplay with several essentially identical game modes, but then all taken away again because I'm in charge and I can do that sort of thing.

Let's Ride: Silver Buckle Stables scores big from the off by inexplicably defaulting my name to 'Juan' during the character selection process, which makes me feel adventurous and exotic. Unfortunately it's also the only time the game makes me feel anything other than furious. It's broken down into two basic sections: grooming, which consists of not letting your horse starve and occasionally scrubbing it with a floating icon like you're using the brightening tool in Photoshop, and competitions, during which you make your horse run along invisible red lines, or as close to them as the arse-handed controls will allow. Aside from dressing your character in disturbingly grown-up cowboy/girl outfits which make them look like traumatised kids from teenie talent shows the 'action' pretty much ends there.



When it comes to torture, word has it the CIA are pretty hot for waterboarding. Pros: the sensation of drowning leaves no marks of physical abuse. Cons: the Geneva convention says, 'absolute no no'. As an alternative, I suggest **The Dog Island**, which not only slips under the human rights radar but is also immensely disturbing. The opening sequence features a vomit-strength ballad sung by an infant, during which fist-headed dogs with tiny bodies cuddle each other and, inexplicably, a penguin. I chose a Doberman hoping to inject some menace into the proceedings. It didn't work.

Abomination of the month

I used to work in a poorly funded tourist attraction featuring animatronic displays full of old, broken models. When they moved they'd lurch jerkily, pistons and hydraulics screeching while their mouths gaped grotesquely to mimic a booming voiceover about shipbuilding, and terrifying schoolchildren. This is the standard of animation found throughout **Johnny Bravo's Date-O-Rama**, in which characters open and close their mouths stupidly for several seconds after they've stopped talking. It's been four years since the Cartoon Network series finished – presumably the length of time it takes for a lone monkey to bang out a game via random keystrokes conducted with its own swinging appendage.





Here's an important lesson to learn when playing chicken in GTA IV: bring a car.



Info

Format PS3 ETA Out now
Pub Rockstar
Dev Rockstar North
Players 2-16 online
Web rockstargames.com/IV
It's like Croydon high street on a Saturday night.

Crim City

Grand Theft Auto IV

Looking for that special someone online

You know online combat. It's fast and frantic. The adrenaline rush of Call Of Duty 4. The teamwork of Warhawk. The tactics of Rainbow Six Vegas 2. It's serious stuff – it's warriors meeting on the digital battlefield.

GTA IV is a different prospect. It's explosive, amazing and chaotic but, most importantly, it's laugh-out-loud funny. Whether you're in a deathmatch or a mission-based challenge, all thoughts of winning or beating the opposition are soon sidelined when you throw in cars, helicopters, speedboats and, oh I don't know, *an entire freaking city* to play with. All hell breaks loose

and for once all that guff about it not mattering whether you win or lose is actually true. It *is* the taking part that counts. It's about you and your mates screaming through Algonquin in a police car trying to shoot out the tyres from someone else's Sentinel. It's about finding a chopper, a rocket launcher, a bus, a ramp to jump... anything that you can throw into the mix to create another "OMG did you see what just happened!" moment.

This is the entire GTA recipe online. Anything you can do in the single-player game can happen in multiplayer. And with up to 16 people improvising with whatever comes

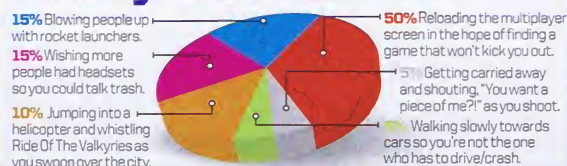
to hand it's brilliantly unpredictable. Case in point: one of the best game types – Cops 'n Crooks – involves a breakneck chase between opposing teams – one playing as cops, the other as crooks who have to escort a boss to an escape vehicle while the law do their damndest to kill him. How either team achieves this is up to them. I've seen helicopters crashed onto people, cars smashed to dust with garbage trucks and watched crooks

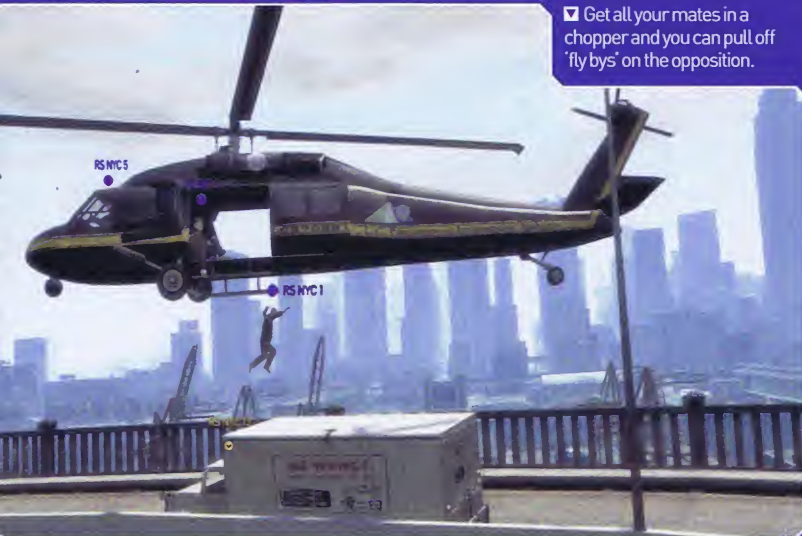
use hijacked buses as road blocks to bring pursuing rozzers to a grinding halt.

In total there are 14 game modes to mess around in, the variety of which shames many other online offerings. Once you leave basic, vanilla deathmatches behind



What you do in... GTAIV





Get all your mates in a chopper and you can pull off 'flybys' on the opposition.



You can tweak the settings to have as much, or little, police interference as you like.

there are things like Mafiya Work, where you compete to finish missions for a local mob boss – everything from offing witnesses to smashing a competitor's advertising hoardings. There are also entirely mission-based games. Hangman's NOOSE has you escorting a Mafia Don from his jet to a safe house as the entire force of the NOOSE team (Liberty City's version of SWAT) try to stop you. Bomb da Base II, on the other hand, has you hijacking explosives and then assaulting a ship from a helicopter before fighting your way inside and blowing it up.

Also available for choosy urban anarchists are challenges where you steal drugs, boost cars to order, compete for territory or race. And there's a multiplayer free-roam option. The variety alone is enough to justify your GTA IV purchase.

There is one big fat 'but' though, and it's the reason for the final score. Actually getting

online is murder. I've played across six different machines and five different internet connections and had everything from nights of uninterrupted fun through to *entire days* where I couldn't get a game.

Silent city

There's no permanent lobby either. If the connection is lost then you're kicked back into single-player and have to load up the multiplayer from scratch. Even when you do get a game it's likely to be small, with four or five players rattling around in search of company. You can invite friends but it would be nice if you could just fire it up and jump straight in without having to check everyone's diary first. This *should* be a 'ten' experience – it makes most multiplayer games look tired and old. But the connection problems are too big an issue to ignore, and until they're resolved GTA IV can be as frustrating as it is wildly entertaining.

Leon Hurley



Online round-up

With Leon Hurley



Haze's reasonably decent online content drags the weak main game behind it like a rasping, malformed parasitic twin. The 'asymmetrical' combat is well balanced: there's no clear advantage to either Mantel's drug-fuelled supersoldiers or

Promise Hand's lo-fi guerrilla tactics, which creates interesting battle dynamics. There are some good multipart missions joining the usual deathmatches, too, like fighting over a Mantel base or stealing supplies, with the objective changing according to which side you're playing. It's also stable online with easy-to-find, well-populated games that suffer little lag and few connection issues. It's no Timesplitters 2, though. What is?

One sentence review: Great ideas, pity about everything else. First up, **Enemy Territory: Quake Wars** is an ugly game. Even with

blocky, sparsely populated environments and an almost complete lack of textures it struggles to reach a playable frame rate. It also inexplicably loads constantly between games. What it's doing is a mystery because it sure isn't squeezing a whole lot of 'pretty' into my PS3. Annoyingly there's huge depth to the juddery, ugly battles with multipart objectives seeing humans and Strogg battling over mining lasers, radar stations and other tactically important sites. Plus, class skill sets vary massively from infantry to artillery-building engineers and spies – creating huge potential for team work. Unless the dodgy frame rates are patched up though, this conversation is over.



The European Championships are over, but it should still be fun to go online and attempt to pervert the course of history via EA's **Euro 2008** tie-in. It *should* be. However, all it takes to spoil an ace online experience is an army of babies who want to win, win, WIN!, at the cost of variety and fun. So everyone plays as the indomitable France (turns out the virtual and real worlds aren't that similar, eh Henry?). Yawn. Play it with actual mates and random sides, though, and you're laughing.

Download of the month

It feels wrong describing a game as adorable. Especially Street Fighter. But **Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo HD Remix** (£6.99) is adorable. From the meows of

cat-woman Felicia (guest starring from Namco's Darkstalkers series) to baby Ryu's 'Hadoken!' it's hard to stifle an 'Awww!' as they fight. But this isn't traditional combat, it's actually an addictive block puzzler. You match falling gems by colour, sending them over to your opponent's screen as an 'attack' while cutesy combatants sock it out in the middle of the screen. It's not the biggest game in the world with only nine rounds to its single-player mode, but there are four game types and endless playability through the online and split-screen multiplayer.



mail @opm



This month: Niko Bellic's long lost twin plus a heady blend of joy, pleasure, disappointment, regret and, of course, anger.

★ Honesty punished

I've had my PS3 for about six months and every now and then it's had little breaks from perfection and crashed. So I rang good old Sony and they sent me a brand spanking new 60GB one, straight to my door, on the understanding that I had to hand over my old one. I collected my new one from the delivery dude in shorts, and went to grab the old one and kiss it goodbye, but as I got to the door he was driving out of my street. What's a man with two PS3s to do? Well, I did some gymnastics around

the room and rang up all my friends in tears of happiness to brag. I could now have one in the living room and one in my bedroom! But after I calmed down, I was thinking about My Name Is Earl, and how good stuff happens to those who do good things, so I got back on the phone to Sony (while fighting back more tears) to tell them their mistake. Two days later somebody knocked on my door, the dude in the shorts was back to take the PS3 (along with my dreams) away with him in his van. Moral of the story: I did a good deed, so surely something good should be coming my way... right?

Adam Bowman, by email

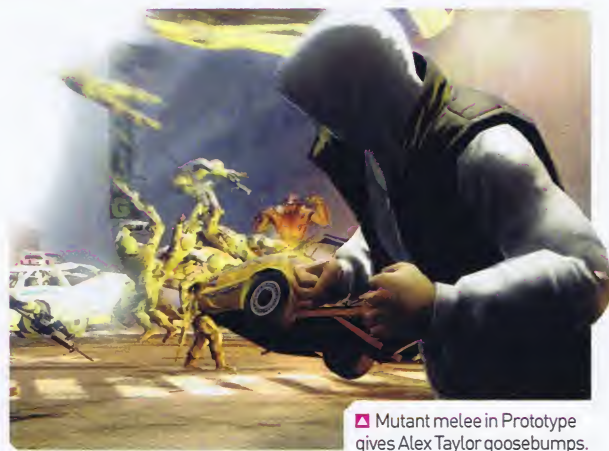
We believe in cold science not karmic justice, but *just in case* here's a free subscription to the magazine. Now we should get something good right? Hang on, there's a knock at the door. It must be the twins...

Daddy cool?

Here's a picture for you. Niko Bellic and my dad, separated at birth?

Elliott Tudor, by email

Your old man rocks the amoral Eastern European gangster look pretty hard. To complete the effect, how about next time



▶ Mutant melee in Prototype gives Alex Taylor goosebumps.

▶ Elliott's dad proves the Niko Bellic look is so hot right now.



you're in the car together stick Jean Michel Jarre on the stereo and smash out the driver's side window.

PlayStation passion

I got a shiver up my spine when I saw your picture of the caped crusader face to face with the iconic Sub Zero. I get tingles at the ends of my fingers every time I pick up the sexy wireless controller and GTA IV starts up. The Prototype screens and info make the hair on the back of my neck stand up. What a time to be a gamer! I was in the lines of the faithful queuing at midnight to pay paper for the genius that is Metal Gear Solid 4. To swap small notes of meaningless cash for something that will stay with me for a lifetime, the conclusion to the greatest saga in gaming. It made me so nostalgic reading through your Hide And Freaks feature. Honestly if this letter of PlayStation patriotism was written by hand, you would be struggling to make out the words due to the smudges made by my tears on the ink.

Alex Taylor, by email

You're a unique and beautiful snowflake, Alex. Here's a summary of our most recent emotions: terror at the thought that Soulcalibur IV might be bust, fury at Michael Essien's continuing refusal to sign

Tell us what's on your hard drive! Email us at opm@futurenet.co.uk

What's on my hard drive



Jamie Prevett, by email

Music

Linkin Park, Nickelback, Scouting For Girls and the Soviet National Anthem.

Photo

Most of my pictures are from Haze or Motorstorm, but also some from my skiing holiday.

Video

Mostly game trailers like Haze, Mirror's Edge and Dark Sector.

Game

My favourite games are COD4, Guitar Hero III, Rainbow Six Vegas 2 and Gran Turismo 5: Prologue.

Friends

I only really know three of my friends, but I have about 50 that I met online!



in PES 2008 Master League, elation that Resident Evil 5 looks every bit as good as the trailers, and frustration that we still can't reveal Sony's big secret game... yet.

Money talks

I've read in the past about how games are like big budget movies and that the smaller studios can't hope to compete because they don't have the money. I understand their anguish, but I can't say I wholly agree. EA is a massive gaming company, but it has the ability to produce some fairly average games; as does Konami and Capcom. My point is that it's not all about money. I'd like to think that it depends on the talent that's around you and their enthusiasm to make a game really good. The Batman Begins game had a great concept, using fear on the villains, but the game overall was poorly executed. People can have great ideas and concepts, but if the team around you are a bunch of slackers with no vision and little interest, you can wave all the money in the world around, but the game will still be rubbish!

Llewly Cohen, by email

Interesting stuff, but it's too simplistic to only lay the blame for big budget failures on skiving programming staff. Anything from unrealistic deadlines to feature creep (attempting to include elements from new games midway through your own development cycle) can sink a project. The truth is that the most critically acclaimed games of the current generation – GTA IV, MGS4, COD4 – have all been made by established studios backed by powerful publishers. You're right to point out that it's the skill and passion of the dev team that counts most, but in the increasingly blockbuster-driven culture, we're left wondering where the next Killer7 will come from.

Manga anger

Most people know Guyver or have seen at least an episode, so why, with all the truly stunning third-person games like Uncharted, Assassin's Creed and Ninja Gaiden, have we not seen a Guyver game? Think about it: running around in a bio-boosted armour suit slicing zoanoids into tiny pieces, all done in cel shading like the new Prince Of Persia game. Come on, that does sound awesome, doesn't it? So if there's any hint of this being made, can you please inform us all, and if there isn't, there damn well should be!

Danny Collins, by email



▲ Batman Begins had a nice idea. Yes, that's right, one.



Ask SONY

Q Are PSP memory sticks region free?

A Yes, Memory Stick Pro Duos are region free. The brand new 16GB version is the perfect companion for downloading classic PSP games such as Flow and Ape Quest from the PC version of the Store.

✓ Even lengthy delays couldn't help Haze from failing.



Guyver? Isn't he the one who can make a four-door saloon out of a stick of chewing gum, a drinking straw and some ball bearings? Oh, right... big robots is it. No, we're all big-roboted up thanks. (But you might want to keep your fingers crossed that Kojima's next game will be the rumoured Zone Of The Enders follow-up.)

Drug shame

Since November last year I, and many other people, have been waiting for Haze to be released. For months I have searched the web and magazines (OPM being my primary source) for any information or rumours on the game. I hoped that when it was put back until after Christmas it would be to fine tune and ripen the richness of the game; instead it has rotted like an old sour orange. The levels are basic and contain little detail; the story is too simple and far too short. Free Radical did not hide the key twist to the game (fighting for both sides) but I had hoped for something unexpected – seems even this desperate hope was shattered. Call Of Duty 4 could have a six-hour campaign because it was like a film and every second was amazing, but every second I played this I felt sicker and more disappointed. Why haven't developers learned from the likes of Kane & Lynch that a poor plot, bad AI characters and pathetic gameplay equals nothing more than very angry gamers?

Chris Starkey, by email

Oh Haze... There was a brief moment – somewhere between seeing the MS Paint tree textures and hearing the sub-Ultimate Force dialogue – when we thought maybe we'd got a 'bad batch'. But no, it really is sad smiley shooter. So much so that our Rach claims she got a bigger kick from licking the box than playing the game.

Off the Wall



Choice cuts from the OPM Facebook group



Sonic's return

"Yes! Hedgehog heaven awaits!"

Lee Baker



Trash talk

"I'm sure we've all got a message from some ten-year-old saying 'You sukk!'"

Laura Varley



PS3 crushes

"Can I say the 'tache on Captain Price is just too sexy."

Christopher Larsson



Norfolk

"I do not have any suspicious intentions towards any of my cousins, or webbed feet!"

Blythe Furness



Home

"We can see the twisted views people have of themselves with their avatars."

Steve Bamdad



Facebook wedding

"Do you, Laura Varley, take Alex Duhig to be your lawful Facebook husband?"

Ben Collins



Best bosses

Hardest? Jinpachi from Tekken 5 or the army of Metal Gear RAYs from MGS2."

Chris Lane



Confessions

"Apparently I ran shirtless with a stripper."

Alex Duhig

Send your questions to:
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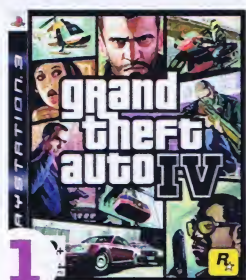
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PS3

Essential collection

Build the ultimate PS3 library with our no-filler guide to the best next-gen games so far



1 Action Grand Theft Auto IV

It's everything you love about GTA – the twisted characters, epic missions and savage humour – polished to perfection. A true modern masterpiece.

10 Pub Rockstar Games
Dev Rockstar North



2 Shooter Call Of Duty 4 Modern Warfare

Take on terrorists as the SAS and US Marines as Call Of Duty dumps WW2 for a contemporary setting. This is a beautiful, brutal and near flawless shooter.

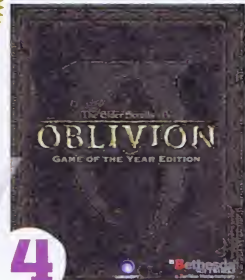
10 Pub Activision
Dev Infinity Ward



3 Stealth Metal Gear Solid 4 Guns Of The Patriots

A typically esoteric but masterful end to Snake's saga, blending beautifully immersive action with a lifetime's worth of cut-scenes. Divisive but essential.

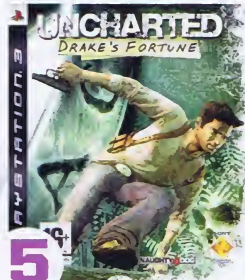
10 Pub Konami
Dev Konami Productions



4 RPG Oblivion Game Of The Year Edition

An adventure so vast and all-consuming you'll lose months to its quests and battles. Now with the Knights Of The Nine and Shivering Isles expansion packs.

10 Pub Ubisoft
Dev Bethesda Softworks



5 Action-Adventure Uncharted Drake's Fortune

Treasure hunter Nathan Drake is after the fabled gold of El Dorado in this superb blend of action and puzzles. Think Gears Of War meets Tomb Raider. Then buy.

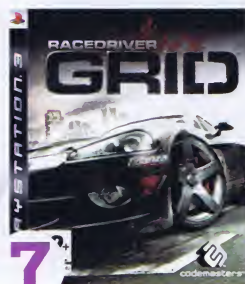
9 Pub Sony
Dev Naughty Dog



6 Platformer Ratchet & Clank Tools Of Destruction

Platforming royalty return to save the galaxy. Exquisite graphics and a riotous arsenal of comedy weapons make this the pair's best interstellar outing yet.

9 Pub Sony
Dev Insomniac Games



7 Driving Race Driver Grid

Straight from the TOCA garage and into first place. It's the smooth mechanics, aggressive races and fine tuned cars that make this the best racer currently on PS3.

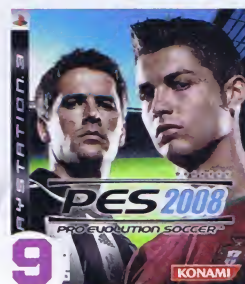
9 Pub Codemasters
Dev Codemasters



8 Skater Skate

This Tony Hawk-beater uses both analogue sticks to construct an intuitive, rewarding control system that makes you work for every flip and grind. Brutal, yet so satisfying.

9 Pub EA
Dev EA Black Box



9 Sports PES 2008

Diving aside, there are no headline-grabbing features, and visually it's just so-so, but the core pass-move-shoot gameplay is as brilliant as ever. Virtual footy at its finest.

9 Pub Konami
Dev Konami



10 Music Rock Band

Sing, strum or pound your way to living room superstardom with 45 licensed tracks from Radiohead's Creep to the Stones classic Gimme Shelter. Groupies not included.

9 Pub EA
Dev Harmonix

PS3 Aliens

Blacksite
Play spot the political irony among the corpses of mutated US soldiers.

The Orange Box
Sci-fi shooter rife with long-legged hunters and an embarrassing case of head crabs.

Ratchet & Clank Tools Of Destruction
Chuck fusion grenades at toxic space bugs, goldfish in spacesuits and dinosaur-sized leviathans.

Unreal Tournament III
Macho men take on the evil Krall and compare the size of their biorifles.



PSP

Essential collection

10 indispensable games for your handheld - try them or buy them, just make sure you play them



1

Action-Adventure
God Of War
Chains Of Olympus

Bloody, god-slaying prequel that matches the PS2 games' vibrant visuals and frantic hack and slash action.

10 Pub Sony
Dev Ready At Dawn



2

Strategy
Final Fantasy Tactics
The War Of Lions

A genuinely gripping plot, delicious-looking visuals and the oceanic 'job' system make this the best Fantasy so far.

10 Pub Square Enix
Dev Square Enix



3

Platformer
LocoRoco

Tilt a 2D world to guide a growing, smiley-faced blob to safety while sugary Japan-o-pop tickles your ears. Rolls all over Me & My Katamari.

10 Pub Sony
Dev SCE Studios Japan



4

Free-Roaming
Grand Theft Auto
Vice City Stories

Everything you'd expect from GTA, only smaller. Compelling missions on foot or behind the wheel, plus plenty of '80s tunes.

10 Pub Rockstar
Dev Rockstar Leeds



5

Puzzler
Lumines II

Move blocks and clear the screen to a brilliantly eclectic soundtrack. New features and modes improve an addictive fusion of music and puzzling.

9 Pub Buena Vista
Dev Q Entertainment



6

Rhythm
Patapon

Scrolling 2D battles with a side order of crazy. Control your army of eyeballs with different drum beats, taking on rival tribes and huge monochrome monsters.

9 Pub Sony
Dev Pyramid/Interlink



7

Fighter
Tekken
Dark Resurrection

With stunning looks, loads of mini-games and new moves, this offers some of the best multiplayer action on PSP.

9 Pub Sony
Dev Namco Bandai

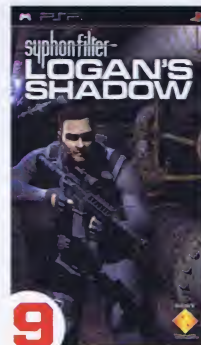


8

Platformer
Ratchet & Clank
Size Matters

The duo's handheld debut is a platforming riot. Uproarious weapons and compelling levels make this a must-have hit.

9 Pub Sony
Dev High Impact Games



9

Stealth-Strategy
Syphon Filter
Logan's Shadow

A top-class stealth sequel. Gabe returns with new weapons, new moves and the news that his partner could be a double agent.

9 Pub Sony
Dev Sony Bend



10

Racer
Ridge Racer

Powerslide around a mix of classic and new tracks. A great arcade racer where teasing out a drift while taking a corner at 135mph never gets dull.

9 Pub Namco Bandai
Dev Namco Bandai

PSP
Fire

Eragon

Lair meets Harry Potter as you play the fresh faced dragon rider and flambée anyone in your way.



Lemmings

These little guys are drawn to fiery pits and it's your job to guide them to safety.



God Of War
Chains Of Olympus

Kratos is popular at barbecues; he never leaves home without his handy fire demon Efreet.



Patapon

Scorching desert and fiery dragons are just some of the dangers your rhythm-addicted troops have to march through.

who is...

Tommy Vercetti

#17
PLAYSTATION
LEGENDS
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Errand boy turned overlord

His predecessor, the unnamed antihero in GTA III, never spoke. Tommy, by contrast, rarely shuts up. He was the first GTA lead to really carry the game, rather than just provide a conduit for the player's kill-crazy rampages, so there was a lot riding on getting him right. Right? He's perfect. Tommy marches into Vice City and takes over with a sneer and an Uzi. Just ask yourself this: what other videogame character could pull off *that* shirt?

Montana moments

Saw spot

The Hawaiian shirt, the struggle for power—Scarface is all over Vice City. Apartment 3C, where Tommy finds a chainsaw in a bloody bathroom, is an obvious nod to Tony Montana's drug-deal-gone-south.



Song and dance

Tommy's got the Malibu club, Tony has Babylon. They both have similar décor and clientele, and Vice City's Flashback FM offers several songs from the Giorgio Moroder-produced Scarface soundtrack.



Mind your manors

As they rise to power, Tony and Tommy have similar mansions—heavy on red, palm tree murals, and CCTV. Both make a last stand in their houses, but while Monty gets a backfist of buckshot, drug-free Vercetti lives.



Low rider

The beaten-up mauve Cadillac Tony drives in the first half of Scarface looks a lot like the Stinger convertible. Nab one from the waterfront and take it to the Pay 'n' Spray until it comes out the right colour.

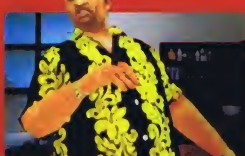


Business partners



Sonny Forelli

Tommy's childhood friend and the linchpin of the Forellis' return to power. It eventually emerges that he set Tommy up—so Tommy shoots him dead.



Ricardo Diaz

Tommy works for the drug lord until his cover's blown by Lance. They then whack him and nick his mansion. His shirt is the same as Montana's in Scarface's torture scene.



Lance Vance

The chopper-piloting half of the Vance family, and brother of Vice City Stories' Victor. Voiced by Philip Michael Thomas—Miami Vice's Tubbs—he shares the white suit love.



Ken Rosenberg

Tommy's contact and lawyer is a coked-up ambulance chaser similar to Sean Penn's character in Carlito's Way. He's gets cut loose as a liability, but lives...

Dress for success



Country club

Tommy starts out dressed Vice-casual, but you can't get into the country club in wet. Way with a four iron in your jeans—hence the change into a tank top and tarten plus fours.



Cop

In the Cop Land mission, Tommy goes undercover, finding himself an outfit that makes him almost the mirror image of tubby Sly Stallone from the film of the same name.



Red tracksuit

Channelling Stiller in Tenenbaums, you don't strictly need this outfit for anything—but it's available in Laundromats and makes you look money, in an OCD way.



The 'Frankie'

Finish the entire game on 100% and you get... this item of clothing: 'I Completed Vice City And All I Got Was This Lousy T-Shirt' in the classic 'Relax' font. Sigh.

Tommy trivia



After GTA III's protagonist had no voice and barely any personality, Rockstar pulled out all the stops with Tommy, getting Ray Liotta to do the voiceover.



Ken can't forget Tommy: during a shootout in San Andreas he says, 'Just like old times, huh, Tommy?' to C.J. C.J. replies, 'Who the f*** is Tommy?'



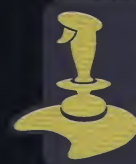
In response to other 'GTA-style' games, Tommy's targets included Marcus Hammond (The Getaway), Nick Kong (True Crime) and Dick Tanner (Driver 2).



...in retaliation, Driv3r mocked Tommy and his lack of swimming ability by including a set of Hawaiian-shirted 'Timmy Vermicellis' in arm bands.



It's unclear how long Tommy ruled Vice City, but he's there in 1992, during San Andreas—Rosenberg tries to call him from a rehab clinic near Las Venturas.



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PLAYSTATION 3